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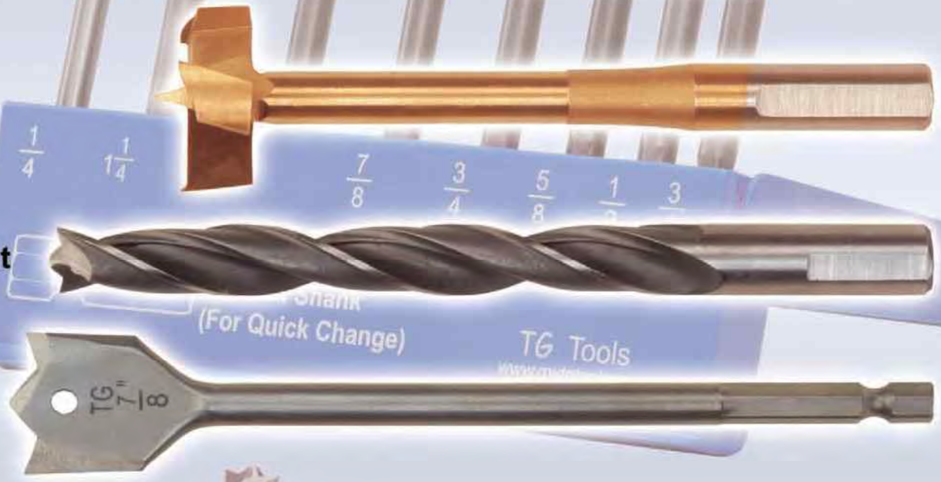

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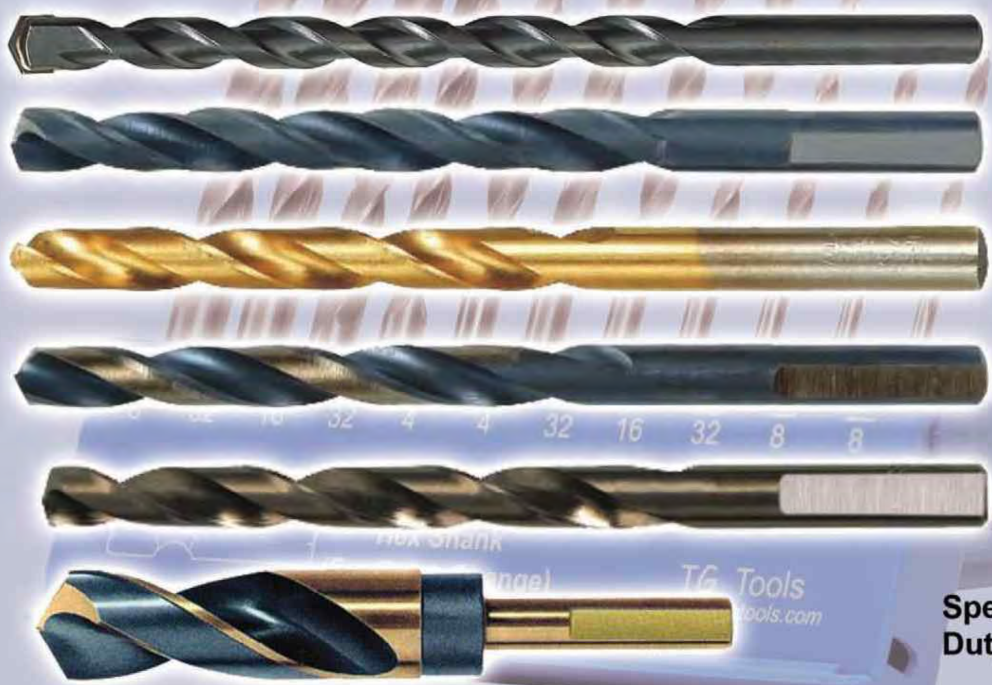

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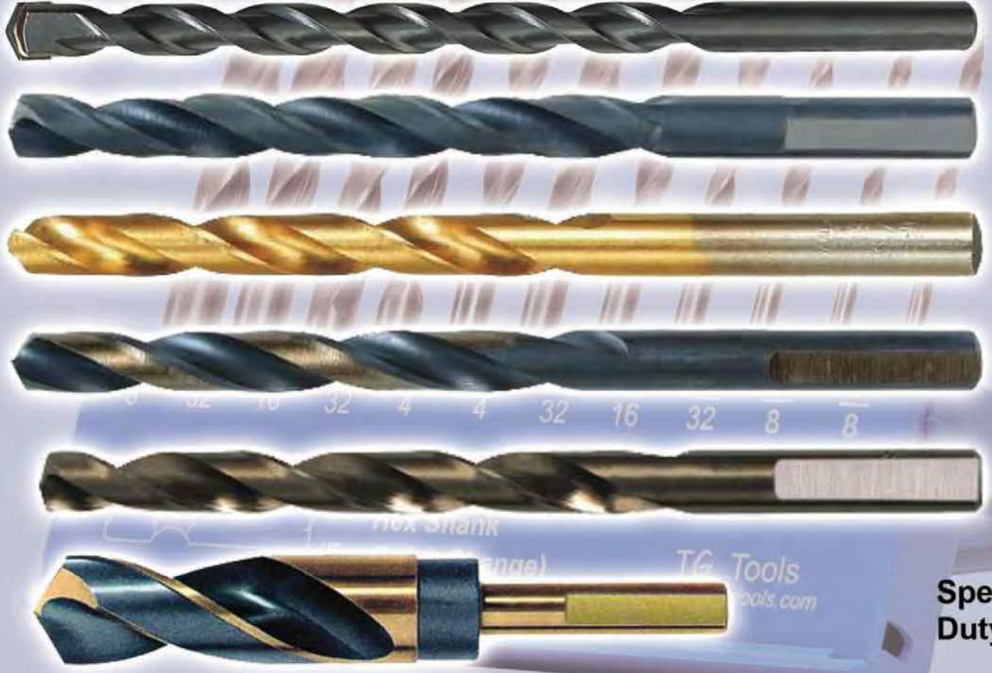

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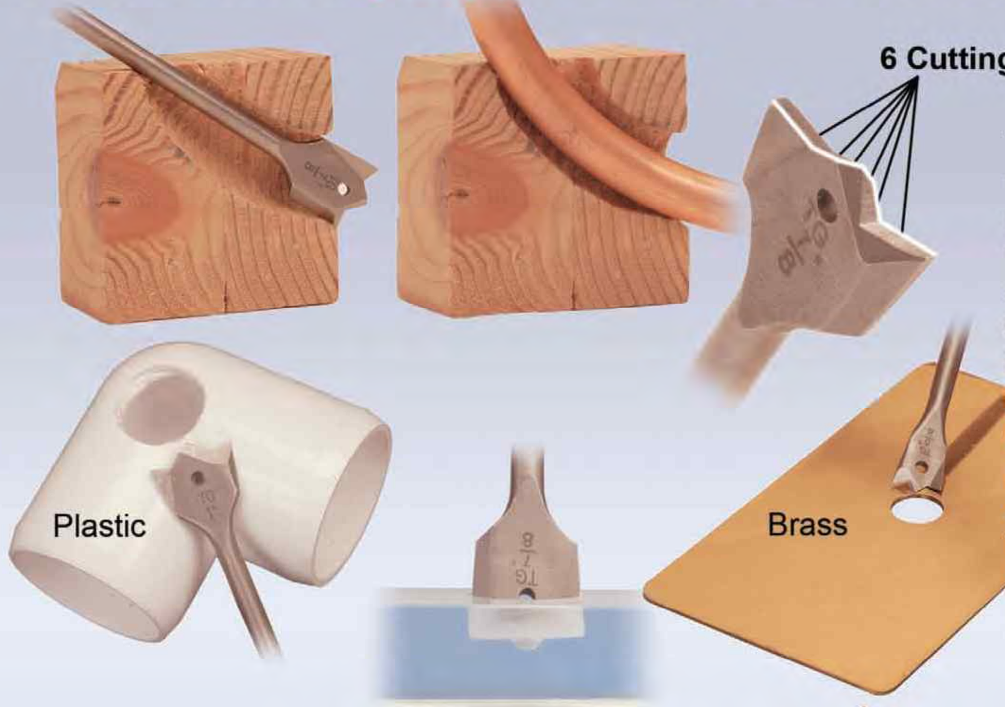

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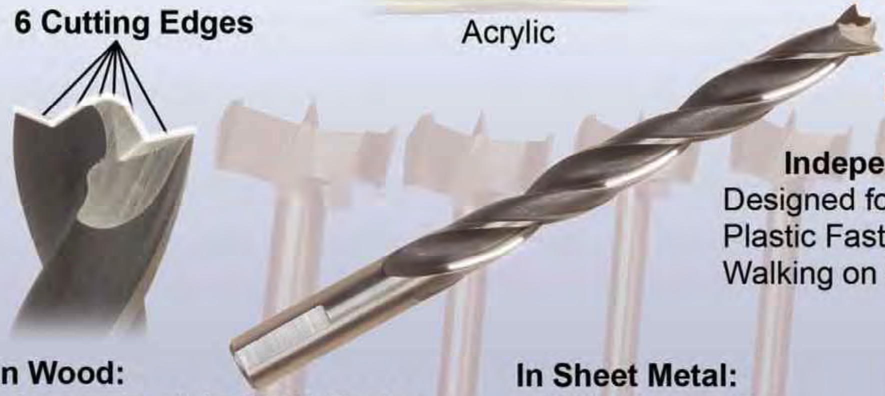

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IT'S TIME TO RETHINK THE GARAGE.®

LETTER *From The Editor-In-Chief*

This is *Extreme How-To's* first digital-only issue of 2009, and we take a close look at that favorite summertime hangout—the deck. With the rising popularity of outdoor living, decks, patios and porches are becoming a popular focus for countless homeowners. Backyard retreats can bring families and friends together in a safe atmosphere at home, for cookouts, parties, games and relaxing. And when keeping an eye on the family budget, entertaining at home can help stretch a buck, while investing in outdoor structures can add value to your home.

In this issue, we explore how to frame a deck, how to install new composite deck boards with a hidden fastener system, as well as how to construct a deck sunroof. We field a few questions from first-time deck builders, and offer some pointers on how to use a pressure washer to clean your outdoor living areas.

Deck building can be a fun and rewarding project that can be left to the pros or accomplished by a savvy DIY'er. With the right tools and techniques, any homeowner can construct a deck or patio to enjoy for years. While this issue of *EHT* should offer some helpful insight on decks, the subject could fill volumes of books. To find further information on techniques and materials for building a deck, we recommend visiting the following sources:

Wolmanized Wood, www.wolmanized.com
Western Red Cedar Lumber Association, www.realcedar.com
Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association, www.cypressinfo.org
North American Deck & Railing Association, www.nadra.org

Thanks for reading,

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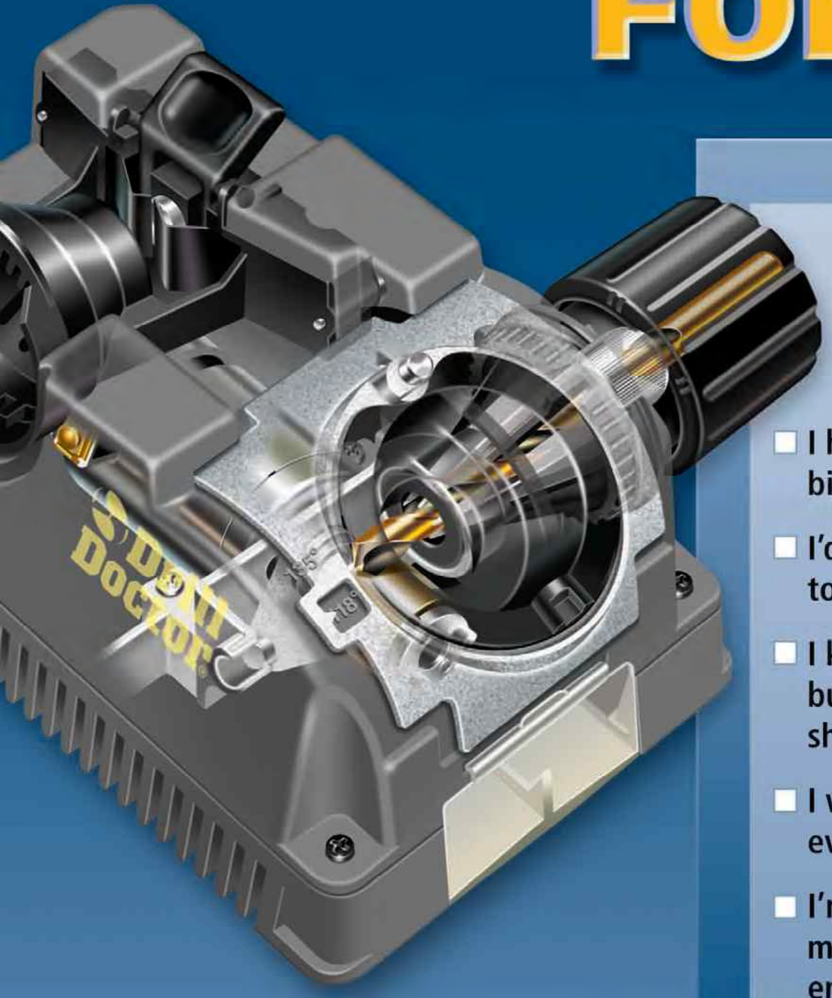

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Q&A Got a ?

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Q: *I'm building a new deck from pressure-treated lumber. What's the best way to prevent mold and mildew on the deck surface?*

A: According to the North American Deck & Railing Association, the best way to prevent the growth of mold is to eliminate the conditions it needs to live. Keep the deck as dry as possible and remove the food source by sweeping or washing. When building the deck, gap the decking 1/8-inch for drainage. Make sure that no gutter downspouts discharge or splatter onto the deck. Keep the gutters clean to avoid overflow onto the deck, and ensure the dryer vent does not discharge near the deck. Pitch the deck properly away from the house for drainage—a minimum of 1/8 inch per 8-foot run. Avoid using bark mulch near the deck, because mulch is typically heavily laden with mildew spores. Keep lawn or plant fertilizer away from the deck, such as overspray from potted plants. Sweep the deck every week, especially when pollen is heavy, and consider the use of spray-on preventive treatments that are formulated specifically to combat mold and mildew growth.

……

Q: *Our rear deck is a little too bouncy. Is there any way to stabilize this without a complete rebuild?*

A: A "bouncy" deck is usually caused by long joists between beams. Assuming you can access the support framing, you can strengthen the deck by installing rows of blocking cut to fit tightly between the joists, spaced every 3 to 4 feet along the span. The blocking should be the same size as the joists (usually made of 2-by-8 or 2-by-10). Drive three 16d galvanized nails through the joists into each end of the blocking. The blocks should be installed in a staggered pattern.

Another option to stabilize the deck: Install an additional beam and support posts to the deck framing. But the blocking method is less complicated.

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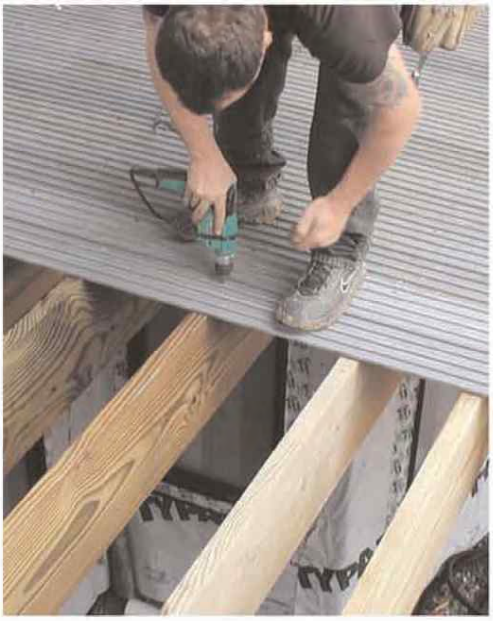

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Q&A Got a ?

Questions About Home Building, Remodeling? Have Your Own How-To Tip? Visit our website at ***www.extremehowto.com*** *and click on Home Repair Forum.*

Q. *We're planning to build a deck this summer, keep it as a deck for a few years, and then build an enclosed sunroom over it once we've saved enough money for the expansion. Will standard deck-building techniques suffice for the foundation?*

A. You should definitely check your local building codes for foundation requirements. Whereas some deck support posts are simply fastened on concrete piers that sit on the ground, such a technique won't suffice for enclosed expansions. The codes and local requirements in your area may dictate the exact minimum sizes you need to include in your planning for joists, beams and posts. The requirements for footings are often very specific, and the inspectors want to see the actual hole in the ground before the concrete is poured.

Q. *I'm a DIY'er who is a little confused on the deck-building terminology. Can you explain the difference between deck beams and deck joists?*

A. Beams are framing members that run across the tops of the support posts and parallel to the ledger board. The beams are usually fastened to the support posts with post caps and screws or nails. Beams support the deck joists.

The joists, on the other hand, are framing members that support the deck boards. The outside joists butt to the end of the ledger (using a galvanized framing anchor), but the inner ones should be installed with joist hangers against the face of the ledger board. On the opposite end of the joists, the joists are often cantilevered past the end beam. Once all the joists are installed, the ends can be cut to length all at once and a rim joist can be installed to enclose the exposed ends of the joists. Check the local building code to determine if blocking is required between the joists to keep them from twisting. **EHT**

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High-Pressure Cleaning

Blast it Clean with a Power Washer

A quality pressure washer can easily tackle homeowner chores like cleaning a patio, deck or driveway.

By Matt Weber

Why spend time and energy scrubbing something when you can blast it clean? The high-pressure water of a power washer can spray clean your home, your tractor, your driveway—you name it. Pressure washers transform a standard garden hose into a lean, mean cleaning machine. But, there's a lot to consider when spec'ing the best washer to suit your needs. When shopping, you should weigh aspects such as PSI versus GPM, gas versus electric power, belt-drive versus direct, and camshaft versus axial pumps. Here's a look at the particulars, and some advice on how to put a pressure washer to good use.

WATER POWER

The PSI (pounds per square inch) rating of a power washer refers to the pressure that the washer unit is capable of producing. Pressure washers rated up to 2,200 PSI are generally used only for light-duty tasks, like cleaning away mud and dirt from automobiles and lawn equipment. Washers rated 2,200 to 3,000 are intended for more frequent use or larger jobs, like cleaning the siding of a house. Washers rated up to 3,500 or more PSI are the heavy-duty units for professional applications at construction sites and paint-prep jobs. Pressure can usually be adjusted at the pump, but some nozzles feature adjustable pressure at your fingertips.

The GPM (gallons per minute) rating refers to the rate of water flow through the unit. Generally speaking, the higher the GPM, the more surface area the washer can clean. So, if you have large areas to clean, then pay close attention to the GPM rating. A washer with a 3-GPM flow rate can clean almost twice as much area as a 2-GPM unit in the same amount of time.

GAS OR ELECTRIC?

Electric washers offer the benefits of low maintenance and quiet operation. They are intended for occasional light-duty cleaning chores and are also notably less expensive than gas-powered units. Plus, electric units are more compact than their gas-powered counterparts, which comes in handy when working in tight spaces. Of course, for an electric unit, you need to run a cord to a nearby power source. Also, the National Electrical Code requires ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to be used when operating an electric model.

For more power, gas is the way to go. Paint prep and heavy-duty cleaning, for applications such as stained concrete, require a gas engine to power the pump. Gas units offer pressure ratings up to

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Electric washers offer quiet operation and low maintenance.

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The gas-powered Maxus pressure washer shown can easily tackle homeowner chores, and serve the professional handyman as well.

a whopping 4,000 PSI, and they offer easy portability because they aren't tethered to a power cord. All gas models are built with 4-cycle engines that run on unleaded gas.

In fact, for the toughest, professional-grade chores, some gas units are designed to operate with heated water. Most power washers use cold water, but for applications such as removing heavy, caked-on grease, some pressure washers employ either a propane or diesel burner to heat the water. However, a hot-water pressure washer is a high-priced, top-end unit for commercial use, and not recommended for most homeowners or DIY'ers because of the cost and maintenance required.

PUMPS—WHAT TO LOOK FOR

The heart of the pressure washer is the water pump. Belt-drive pumps run at a lower RPM than direct-drive pumps and are insulated from motor vibration, which may extend the life of the pump. Direct-drive pumps are mounted directly to the motor. However, this direct mount saves the cost of a gearbox, pulleys and belts, which can result in up to a 30-percent cost increase for a belt-driven unit with the same power output. Aside from that, there isn't much difference in the performance of the pumps.

Basic pump designs come in three models: wobble, axial and camshaft. A wobble pump must wrestle against piston spring resistance on each stroke, which makes it the least efficient of the three models. An axial pump offers a bigger oil reservoir, larger bearings and larger cylinders, which equate to greater PSI and GPM. But piston spring resistance is still an issue, so an axial pump

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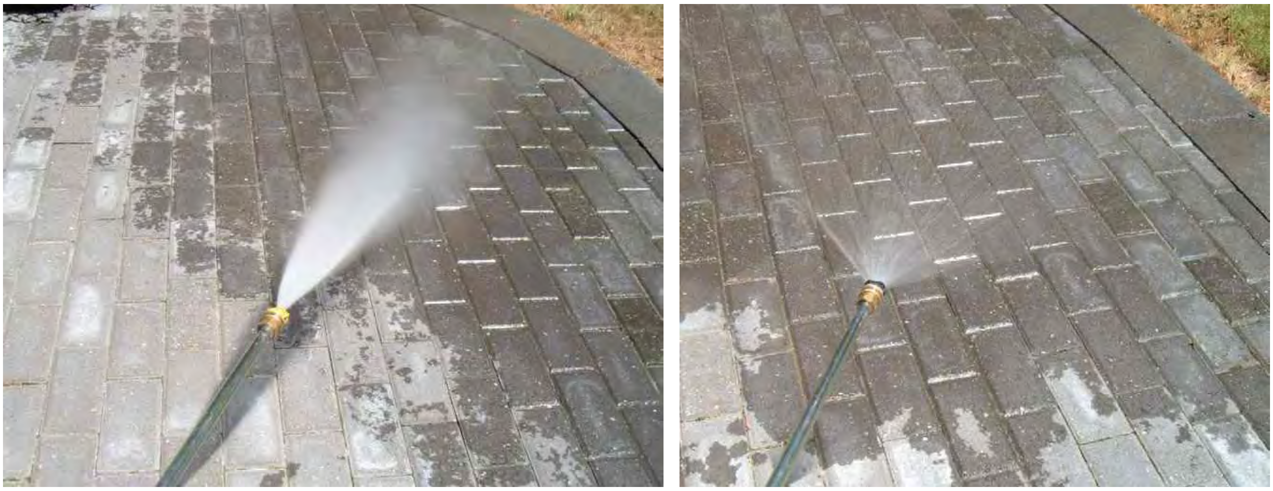
still doesn't offer the efficiency of a camshaft pump. Like a car engine, a camshaft pump uses connecting rods and positive-action pistons, which can result in as much as 85-percent more efficiency than an axial pump. Because this design generates much less heat, a camshaft pump can provide more than 1,000 hours of operation before requiring maintenance. A wobble or axial pump typically has a lifespan of only 200 to 600 hours.

THE RIGHT SETUP

The fundamental setup of a power washer can blast away all sorts of dirt and debris using the water jet alone. But for more cleaning power, use a cleaning solution. Most pressure washers include an injection container that mixes a cleaning agent with the jet stream. For example, Campbell Hausfeld offers a full line of cleaners and detergents, including a Concrete Cleaner, Deck & Fence Cleaner, House & Siding Wash, Car & Boat Wash, a general-purpose cleaner and a heavy-duty degreaser. The rule of thumb for using these solvents is to make sure the label is marked "approved for pressure washer use."

The right nozzle also makes a big difference in washer performance. Most manufacturers offer color-coded nozzles for easy selection, and they attach to the end of the washer wand through a standard quick-connect coupler. Some nozzles spray a fine fan of water for easy coverage when spraying a cleaning agent. When you need to blast away stains on concrete, switch to a zero-degree nozzle, which shoots a concentrated jet that can cut through stubborn dirt and discoloration.

One innovative new pressure



Various nozzles can be used to change the spray pattern, from concentrated streams for high-pressure cleaning to fan-like patterns to apply cleaning solution.

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Most nozzles attach with standard quick-coupling connections. The LadderSaver nozzle shown adds 40 feet of reach to the pressure washer's stream.

washer nozzle is called the LadderSaver (www.laddersaver.com). Just snap the nozzle on the end of the wand, and it extends the spray of your pressure washer jet with or without chemicals to heights of more than 40 feet. This means you can wash upper-story windows and high areas of house siding from the safety and convenience of terra firma; there's no need to use a ladder. The LadderSaver features one-piece, stainless steel construction and can be used with any size pressure washer.

Although a pressure washer creates much higher pressure than a standard garden hose, you may often need the extra cleaning power of a brush or other accessories to power through the toughest cleaning jobs. Available are multipurpose cleaning brush kits, as well as brush extensions for easy reaching.

Among the more innovative pressure washer accessories is the new Pivot Nozzle Pressure Washer Wand from Hyde Tools. The new Pivot Nozzles utilize a pivoting tip that lets the tool do the work of directing the water stream instead of the user. The nozzle tip pivots 90 degrees with a twist of the handle. The pivoting action eliminates the need for the user to bend down when spraying low areas, and eliminates the need to tilt straight up when spraying overhead. Furthermore, when spraying overhead with a straight wand, all the water falls right back on top of the user. With a pivoting nozzle, the user stands out of the way of falling water when spraying upward. With more convenient control of the water stream, there's no need for the user to strain in awkward positions to clean the intended surface.

Another unique accessory is Campbell Hausfeld's Deck N Drive Surface Cleaner. This attachment cleans consistently in a single pass by spraying at an even distance and in an area eight times wider than a regular nozzle. The patented pressure regulation system allows you to adjust pressure for best results on all surfaces. It works with any pressure washer rated up to 2,500 PSI at 2.2 GPM, and includes a lance extension and adapters—perfect for cleaning decks, patios and driveways.

So, check the store aisles and the internet when shopping for

The new Hyde Pivot Nozzle tilts 90 degrees up and down with a twist of the handle.

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your next pressure washer. There's bound to be a model to suit your needs, and they make a great tool for cleaning a home's exterior and boosting its curb appeal. You'll find models made by Troy-Bilt, John Deere, DeWalt, Husky, Coleman Powermate, Briggs & Stratton and Mi-T-M. For a heavy-duty model with the power for professional jobs, *EHT* recommends the Maxus 2705 shown in this article. The Maxus 2705 offers 2,700 PSI at 2.7 GPM, a reliable Robin Subaru engine, a trigger-activated nozzle handle, onboard hose storage and an accessory cargo basket.

If you're choosing a pressure washer for residential use, Campbell Hausfeld offers a full line of high-quality washers, from 1,500-PSI electric models to 2,800-PSI gas models. For more information on pressure washers, a great place to start is www.campbellhausfeld.com. The company has been manufacturing reliable tools and equipment since 1836. **EHT**

Campbell Hausfeld's Deck N Drive pressure washer attachment is ideal for cleaning decks, patios and sidewalks.

PRESSURE POINTERS

Wash it right with these pressure washing tips.

- **When cleaning a new surface, start with a wide spray pattern and hold the nozzle 4 to 5 feet from the surface. Move closer to the surface until the desired effect is achieved. If you start spraying too closely, you could damage the surface rather than clean it.**

- **Keep the nozzle in motion, spraying at a steady speed with long, even strokes to ensure consistent results.**

- **Maintain a consistent distance between the nozzle and the cleaning surface.**

- **When cleaning heavily soiled or stained surfaces with detergents formulated for power washers, apply the cleaner with smooth, overlapping strokes under low pressure.**

- **When using a detergent, allow the cleaner to sit on the surface for a few minutes so it can do its job chemically before rinsing (but don't let it dry). When rinsing, start at the top and work downward for best results.**

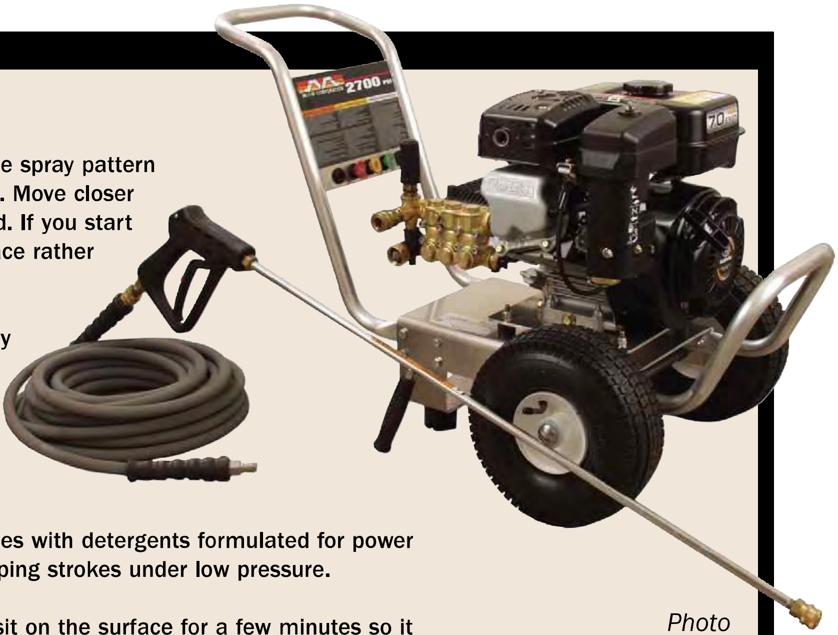

Photo courtesy Mi-T-M

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Forget string and batter boards. Use the deck's bandboards—and a cantilever beam—for fast layout and framing.

Fast and True sundeck framing

By Mark Clement

I'm a big fan of anything that saves me time and increases quality. The first backyard decks and front porches I laid out were the standard affair of strings pulled from the foundation, tied to stakes, and criss-crossed all over the place so I could locate and dig post holes before setting them and framing the deck on top. Now, I do it in reverse order. I make more money and have much more dependable control points for framing.

FRAME A "U"

In this system, all the reference points for locating structural deck parts like posts and joist length start with the ledger and band joists. Build three sides of the deck perimeter (ledger and left and right band joists) in the air. Temporarily support them on 2-by-4's, (strongbacked if the deck is higher than 6 feet). If the project is huge or

Determine the ledger's exact location on the building.

Transfer a level line that indicates the top of the ledger around the building.

Remove the siding just above the ledger layout line.

I tuck Grace Ice and Water Shield behind the siding.

I use Phenoseal caulk to seal under any gaps under doors that integrate with the flashing.

multi-leveled, I use the same method. I just frame it in smaller, more manageable sections. And, you must remove the siding on the building and flash the penetration properly to prevent leaks.

LEDGER, PART 1

It all starts with the ledger. Set it to the right height, cut it the right length, then lay it out for joists. Here's how:

Determine the ledger's exact location on the building. I want my finished deck height flush with any doors so egress to and from the house is seamless, so I use the lowest point of the lowest door as my control point for layout. Then, I subtract the thickness of the decking, plus 1/8 inch. In the case of the Lowes ChoiceDek to be used on this project, that's 1-3/8 inch.

Next, I transfer a level line that indicates the top of the ledger around the building. For short runs a level works, but for longer runs, a laser level is the way to go.

Cut the ledger to the overall width of the deck.

FLASHING

Remove the siding just above the ledger layout line. For the aluminum siding here, I used RotoZips's new metal cutting bit and it blew anything I could do with snips out of the water. Flashing details may vary by area, but the key here is not to skip this part. Many deck failures can be traced back to improperly detailed ledgers that fail, not to mention sill-rotting leaks.

I use a belt-and-suspenders approach to flashing a deck ledger. After the sheathing is exposed, I tuck Grace Ice and Water Shield up under the siding, and then stick it on so there is an impermeable barrier behind the ledger—one that seals around penetrations like lag screws and nails.

Next, I use Phenoseal caulk to seal under any gaps under doors that integrate with the flashing.

Finally, I install copper flashing. That also gets tucked under the siding, an eventually folded over the ledger. Do not

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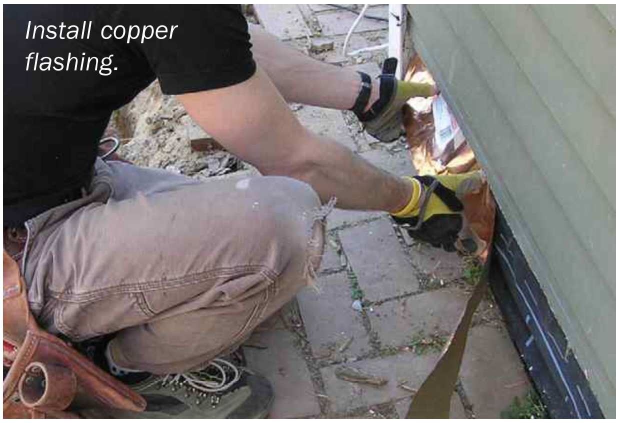


Install copper flashing.

use aluminum. Aluminum does not get along with the copper in the new treated-wood formula, and together they make the recipe for a leak.

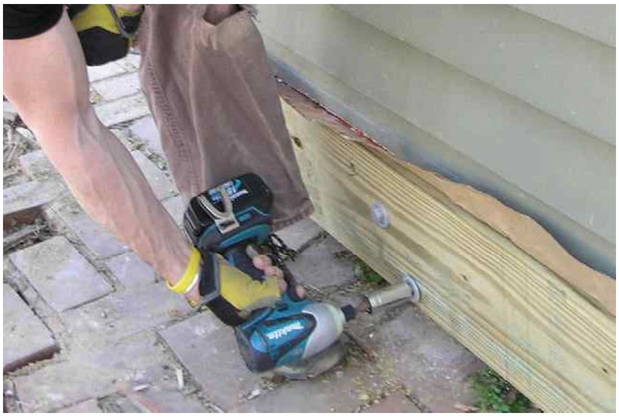
LEDGER, PART 2

Now back to the ledger board.

Lay it out for joists and bolts. Make sure no joist—or joist hangers—interfere with a bolt location. The ChoiceDek decking boards to be used for this project call for 16-inch centers.

Cut 1-1/2 inches off each side of the ledger board—do not cut 3 inches off one end. Cutting the ledger like this enables you to face-nail the left and right band joist to the ledger while maintaining the same control points for layout that you'll need later.

Install the ledger on the line. I use 1/2-inch-by-6-inch double hot-dipped galvanized lag screws, but there are new ledger screws available that I'll use on my next decks from Timberlock and GRK. You



I use an impact driver to install the ledger.

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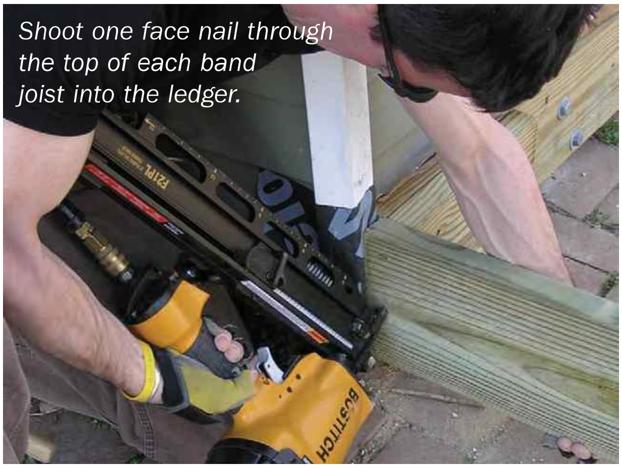
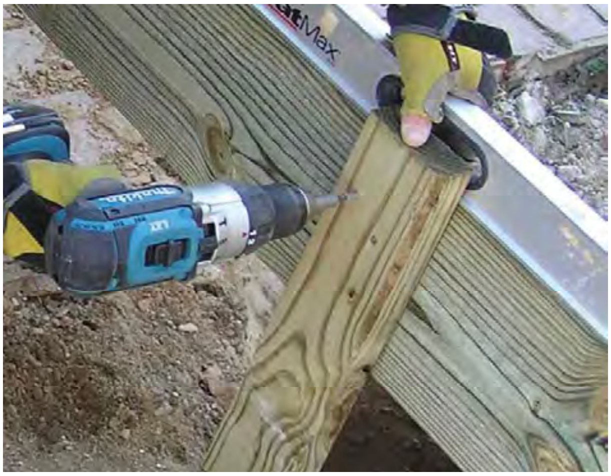
can use a ratchet or wrench to install the bolts, but why? An impact driver will zoom them home nicely.

BAND JOISTS

Determine and cut the band joists to their finish length. Shoot one face nail through the top of each band joist into the ledger. Eyeball it so that it's square to the building, then have someone at the far-end of the board level it. Once in position, tack each band in place on a temporary 2-by post. I set the temporary post 24 inches back from the end of the joist and plumb to the ground. Repeat for both sides. Last, square the band joists and ledger. Pulling a 3-4-5 or 6-8-10 triangle works. Once in place, tack a diagonal from the ledger to the band to hold it.


Shoot one face nail through the top of each band joist into the ledger.


Tack each band in place on a temporary 2-by post.

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POST AND BEAM

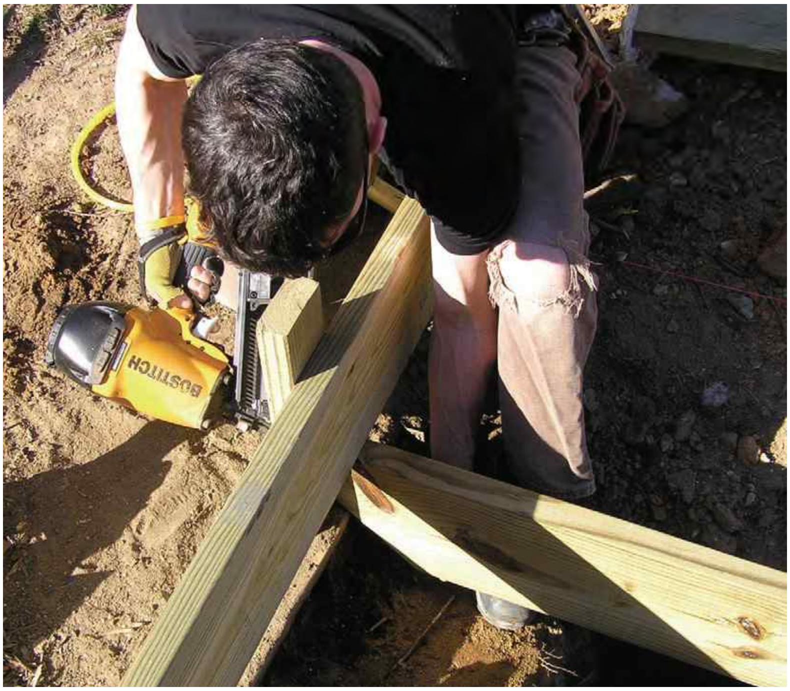
A double 2-by-10 cantilever beam—or "carrying" beam—is the secret to this system. It's what supports the joists from below and enables you to frame the sundeck without poured footings. A double 2-by-10 is code where I build. If the deck is wide enough that I have to splice the beam, I place any breaks centered over a 6-by-6 post. Posts are called for at 6-foot centers, starting 24-inches in from the left and right sides. The length of the beam is 3 inches longer than the ledger—the same as the overall width of the deck. Clipping 45's off the bottom of the beam refines the look. If you want to get fancy, cut an inside radius with a jigsaw.

Hoist the beam tight to the bottoms of each band joist. Get it flush to the front edge of the temporary 2-by-4. Sink three nails through the temporary 2-by into the end of the beam. Next, pop toe-nails through each band into the beam.

Now you can use the carrying beam to lay out the post locations. Use a level or plumb bob and locate where to dig. Without a front band on the deck, there's usually ample working room for shovels, a power auger, or one of my favorite deck-building tools—a Skidster, which I'll rent with an auger and/or bucket or forks for large projects. For hand digging, it's much easier to dig square holes than round. I use a garden edger, shovel and digging bar to dig square holes (16 inches by 16 inches). I dig them wider than required, too. This makes for wiggle room in the holes so I can get the post dead plumb. Finally, for a patio deck like this one here, installing the doubled beam now just gets in the way. Instead, pull a string between the temporary posts and mark your holes. Dig the holes, and then install the beam.

Next, use a circ saw and recip saw to cut a 3-by-9-1/2-inch shoulder at the top of each post to carry the load.

Then, measure for post length using the bottom of the beam as the control point. Measure from the beam-bottom



Toe-nail through each band into the beam.

When digging by hand it's easier to dig a square hole than a round one.

Cut a 3-by-9½-inch shoulder at the top of each post.

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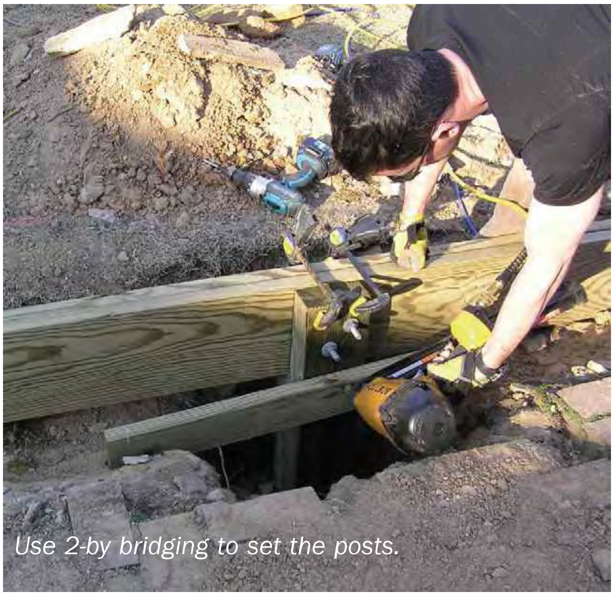
into the holes' bottoms. On the post, pull your tape from the shoulder cut to the bottom of the post and subtract an inch. If you use pier footing forms, figure out the tube's finish height (including post anchor) then cut the post accordingly.

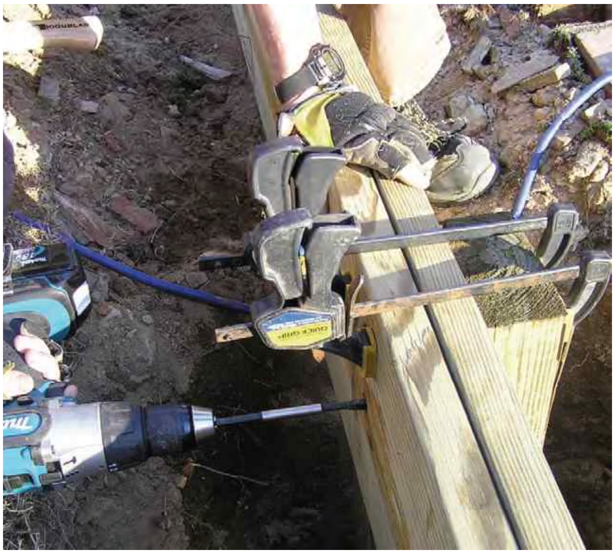
BRIDGING

The next big key to this system is cutting bridging from 2-by stock. I use two pieces of 2-by for each hole, at least 3 feet long each. Place each post in a hole. Lift it up to the beam with the long side of the notch behind the beam. Drive four toe-nails through the post into the beam. Next, clamp it in place. A helper is a good idea here. You can do it alone, but it is a circus of ingenuity to get right.



Use 2-by bridging to set the posts.

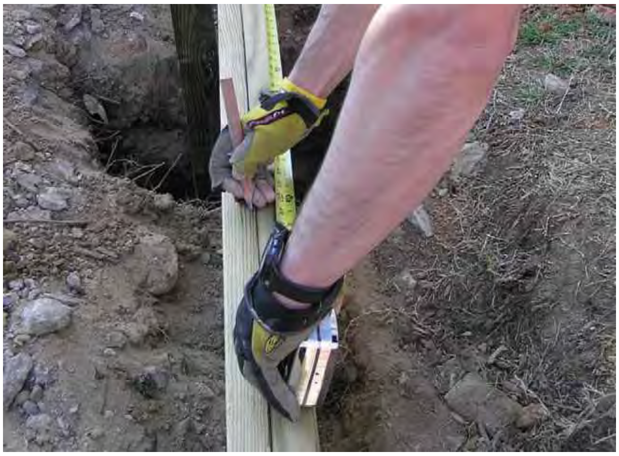
Plumb all four faces of the post, then place the bridging blocks across the holes and nail them to the posts. Before you nail the block, smash it down with your hammer to compress the ground, especially if the ground is wet. The next step is to drill two 5/8-inch holes for 1/2-inch-by-8-inch hot-dipped galvanized carriage bolts, then set them snug—but not tight. Before you sock the carriage bolts tight re-check the posts for plumb. Tighten until the bolt head crunches the face of the 2-by-10.



Use carriage bolts to attach the beam to the posts.

JOISTS

Now it's time to lay the beam out for joists. Pull your tape measure from the end of the beam in the same direction from which you laid out the ledger, marking joist locations. Note: Had you not trimmed 1-1/2 inches off each end of the ledger, your layout would be off at this stage. Next, I nail joist hangers on the joist ends. Then, one at a time, I ride them over the beam and nail them on layout to the



Use a tape measure to lay the beam out for joists.

CORNER DETAIL

For chamfered corners, make sure you install your left and right band joist with a pre-cut 22-1/2-degree angle, the short point facing the beam. Use the third joist in on a 16-O.C. layout as the guide joist for finished length.

Deleting end grain by mitering the band joists is a nice idea and would work if the material you're using is more stable than soaking ACQ pine, but it doesn't hold. To clean up corners, wrap the band with a 1-by or a run of ChoiceDek. It adds nice detail.

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Nail joist hangers on the joist ends.

Toe-nail each side of each joist into the beam.

ledger. Secure the joists by toe-nailing each side of each joist into the beam. It's important to note that you don't cut any joists (other than the left and right band joists already cut to length) before installing them.

GANG CUTTING

It's much easier and more accurate to cut joists to their finished length after they're set on the beam. To do this, snap a line from the end of each band joist on the tops of the new joists. Mark a line using a speed square down from the chalk line, then cut each joist—a worm-drive saw works great in this application. Lastly, face-nail the front band on the joists. Note: like the beam, on a low deck like the one shown here, installing the front band may restrict access to the holes for pouring concrete. Just leave it off until the concrete is poured in the footings, cured, and the holes backfilled.

GOOD TO GO

Now the frame is up, and you're ready to install the decking. More importantly, however, you're ready to call in your footing inspection. My building department requires at least 24 hours before sending an inspector, so framing like this lets me get started

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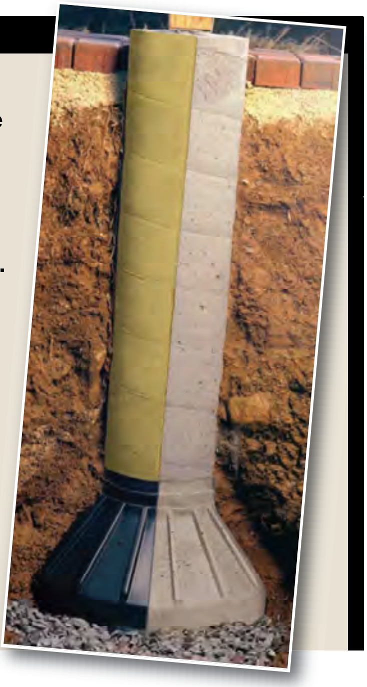
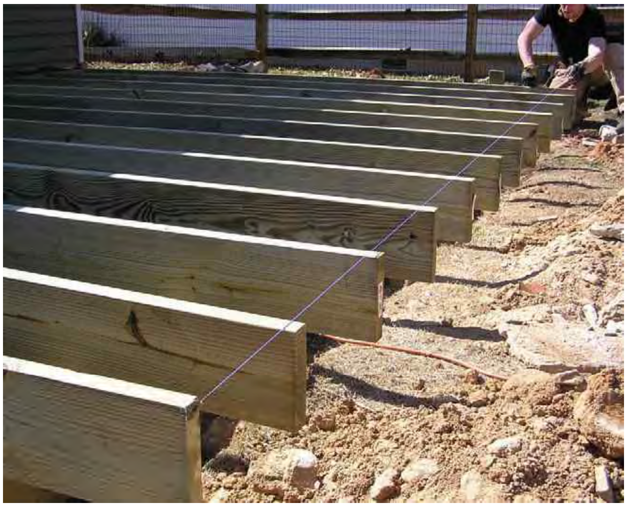
To install, excavate to below the frost line and preparE the area for the footing, which must be placed on level, undisturbed soil or on 4 to 6 inches of compacted crushed stone or gravel. Then follow by placing and leveling the footing form in the excavation. Next, backfill the excavation (without mechanical compaction/tamping) before the concrete is poured. Use another plastic footing form inverted to function as a funnel for the pour. Once the pour is complete and the funnel is removed, all potential unfinished settling and air pockets are removed with tamping or vibration and additional concrete, as necessary. Place three to four No. 4 or No. 5 rebar in the construction tube, extending approximately 6 inches below the bottom ring of the footing form. The top surface may be trowel finished. If an anchor bolt is required, it is inserted at this last stage of installation. Rigid forms used below grade stay in place.

For more information, visit www.bigfootsystems.com.

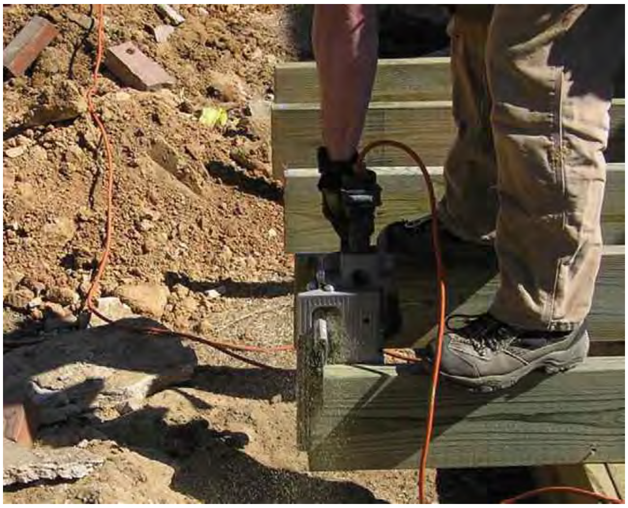


THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR THE JOB

You've got to have the right tools to do things right and make good time. After years of building decks, I find the right mix of tools for me is: a Skil 8-1/4-inch worm drive circular saw, cordless impact drivers, slide compound miter saw, Toolbox saw for Sonotubes, Bostitch framing/hardware nailer, laser level, jigsaw (for radius cuts and notching for downspouts that pass through the decking), skidster (with auger/forks; rental option), 14-plus-pound combination hammer for attaching to masonry and spading hard-to-dig holes.

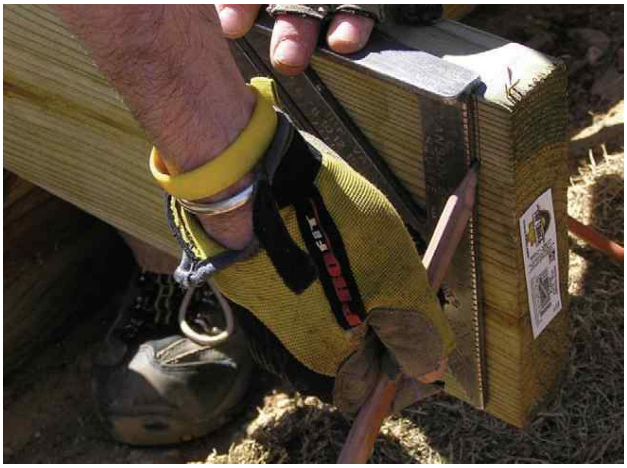


Snap a line from the end of each band joist on the tops of the new joists.

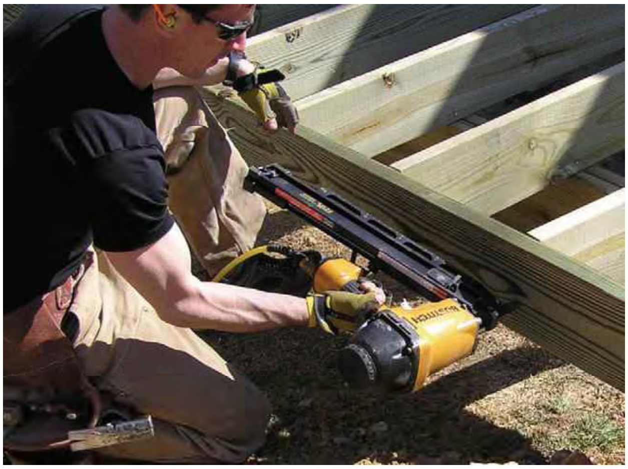


Cut each joist to length.

Mark a line on the joist end down from the chalk line.



Face nail the front band to the joists.



and be reasonably certain that footings are good to go when the inspector arrives. And I can either fix problems he finds easily, or I'm staged to pour concrete, which I pour out of a wheelbarrow. Or, I can move forward with decking and handrails. I can also postpone calling for the inspection if it rains cats and dogs, or if there are other problems—like soil better suited for a jackhammer than a shovel. **EHT**

Editor's Note: *Thanks to Lowes for assistance and design help with this project. www.lowes.com.*

Mark Clement is the author of The Carpenter's Notebook and Kid's Carpenter's Workbook, Fun Family Projects! *Find out more at www.TheCarpentersNotebook.com or www.KidsCarpentersWorkbook.com.*

DECK RECOVE

Replacing Worn-out Wood with Low-Maintenance Composites

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Photo courtesy Travis Industries

By Matt Weber

Decks take a lot of abuse. Due to their very nature, we expect them to withstand brutal attacks from direct sunlight and driving rainwater. And, if not properly preserved and maintained, a pressure-treated wood deck will eventually require a major facelift, as shown in this article.

The sundeck we remodeled for this issue of *EHT* had certainly seen better days, before the wood succumbed to the perils of direct ultraviolet rays. The deck had been slapped with a clear coat of water preservative several years ago, but that was the extent of protection. And being situated on the second-story of a townhouse, there were no trees to shade it from that enormous nuclear cannon in the sky that we call the sun. With no routine maintenance, the 2-by decking boards were no match for the power of Mother Nature, and the lumber had checked, warped and grayed. The deck floor was no longer in the same plane, nails were popping like a pan of Orville Redenbacher, and the cap rail had bowed into the shape of a miniature ski slope. It was time to get out with the old deck boards and in with the new—the "new," in this case, being low-maintenance composite decking.

DECK RECOVERY >>>

EXTRA SUPPORT

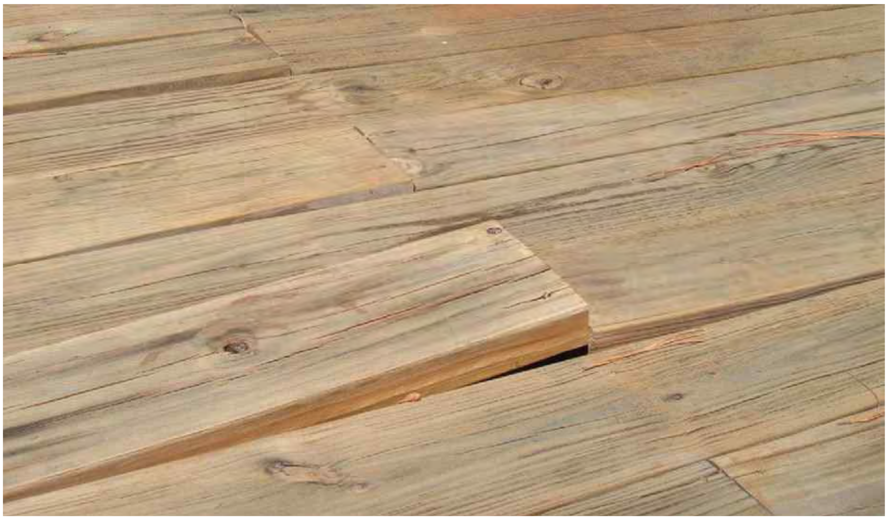
The owner of the deck selected Timbertech's Earthwood brand of composite decking in a "Tropical Teak" color. According to the manufacturer's instructions, the Timbertech boards required the deck joists to span a maximum of 18 inches, but the deck currently existed with joists on 24-inch centers. This meant I had to install additional 2-by-8's between the existing joists.

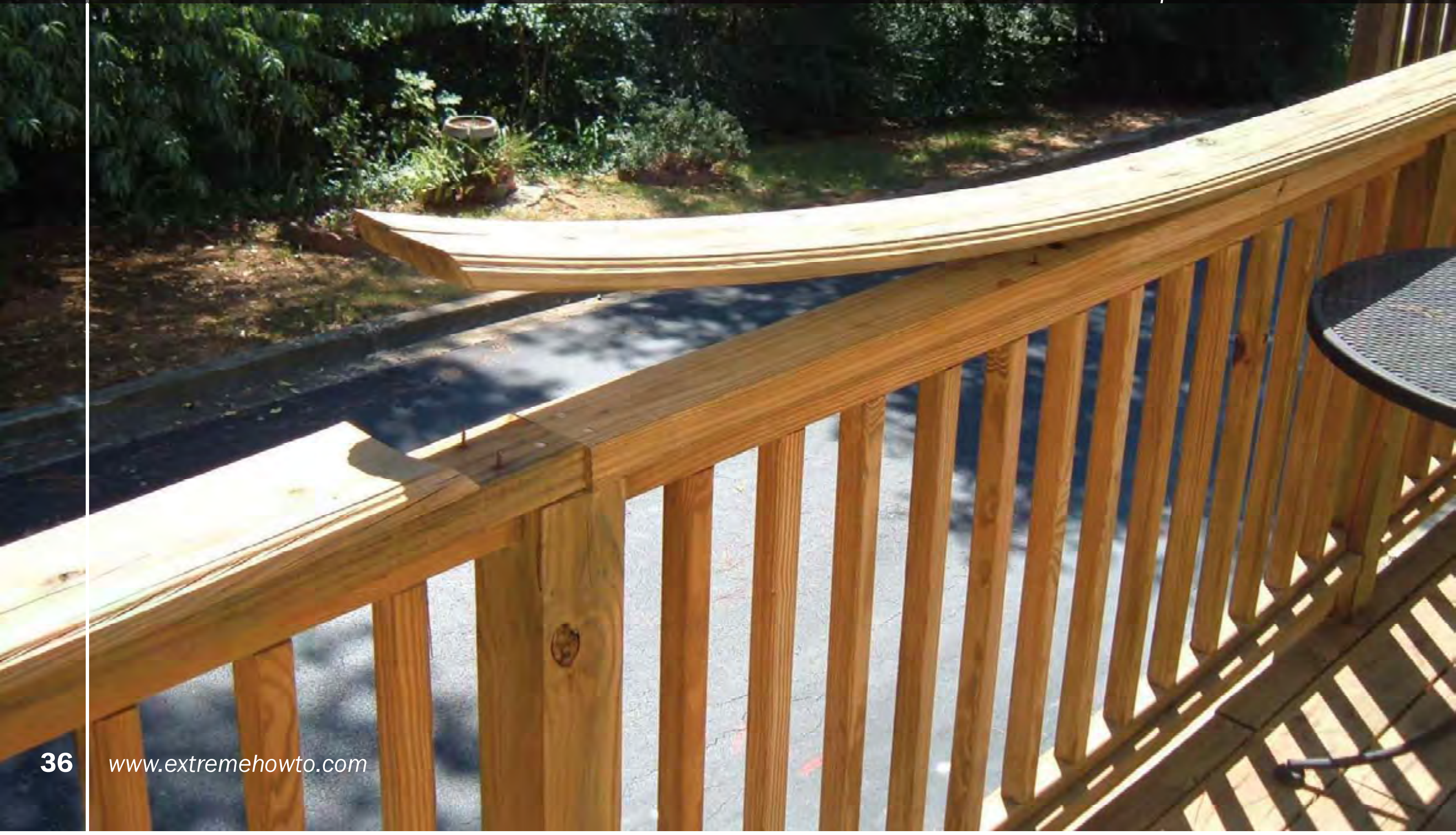
Some quality joist hangers and a sturdy, adjustable ladder came in very handy for this chore, because the framing was roughly 10 feet overhead. The deck was also 10 feet deep. I was working alone on this deck remodel, and that meant balancing the 10-foot joists from atop the ladder, holding them in position and using one hand to nail the ends into the ledger boards. If you're working under similar conditions, then you'll find it helpful to secure a bucket to the ladder for holding the nailer. And, I'd suggest wearing a toolbelt that includes a back brace, because this balancing act can do a number on your lower lumbar region.

Once all the new joists were in position, I reinstalled the long, diagonal support brace that bridged the bottom of all the joists.

DE-DECKING

Ordinarily I would take a beefy pry bar and tear through all the deck boards like a wolf in a hen house, being that tearing stuff down can be a lot more exhilarating than building it up. However,





Due to poor preventive maintenance and the power of Mother Nature, the PTL deck boards have checked and warped.

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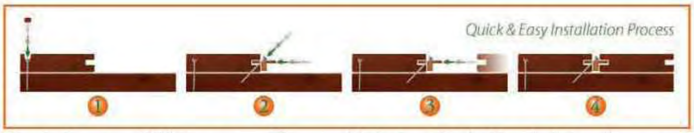
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Skil's Mag 7 worm-drive circular saw made quick work of cutting the 2x8 joists.

I was working 10 feet from the ground, and decided to take it easy, alternatively tearing up and replacing the decking as I worked my way across to leave myself some sturdy flooring on which to work.

I started demolition at the far corner of the deck by plunge-cutting the end plank with a reciprocating saw. Once the board was cross-cut it pulled up easily with a pry bar, and that got things going. I could then use my favorite deck-destroying tool, the Gutster, to pry up the boards from the joists. The Gutster is a monster of a pry bar—at 48 inches long, it has all-steel construction but weighs less than 10 pounds. The Gutster gives you great reach, great leverage, and its huge demolition head

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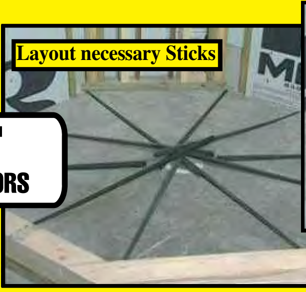
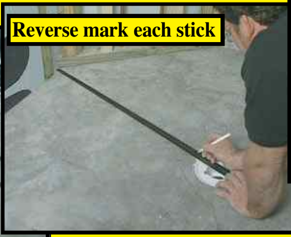
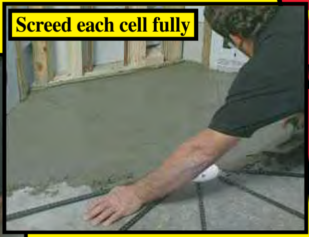

Layout necessary Sticks


Reverse mark each stick


Screed each cell fully

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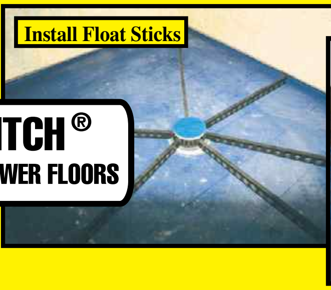
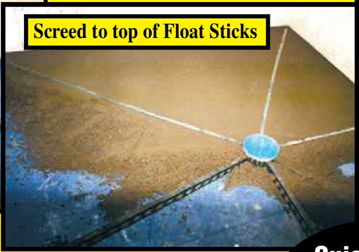

Install Float Sticks


Screed to top of Float Sticks

Mix Mud

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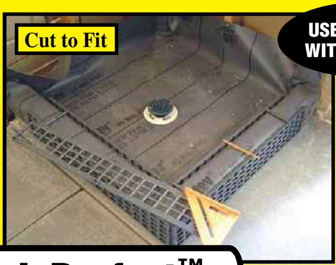
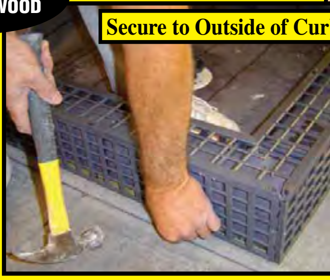
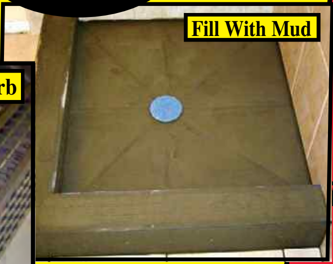

Cut to Fit


Secure to Outside of Curb


Fill With Mud

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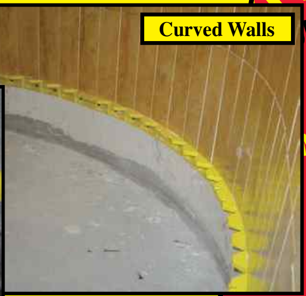
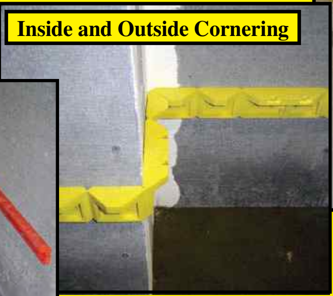
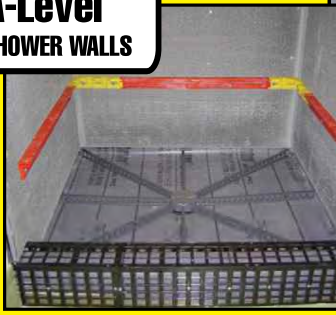

Curved Walls


Inside and Outside Cornering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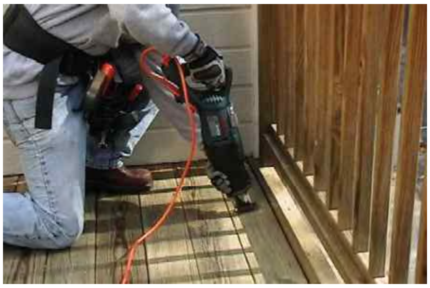
has enough bite to tear up all the heavy framing you can throw at it.

And although the Gutster has built-in nail-pullers, much to my dismay the previous deck builder had used headless, smooth-shank nails—hundreds of which failed to pull up with the deck boards. This meant I was stuck pulling nails with pliers—one at a time, up close and personal.

RE-DECKING

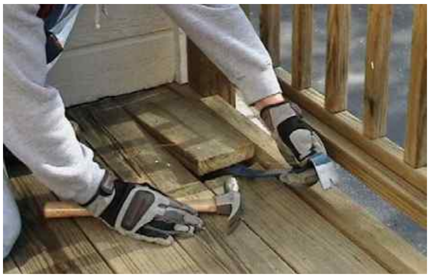
Once all the old deck boards were out of the way, I had the green light for the composites. The first new board went down beneath the hand rail and flush with the outside edge of the deck. I used a drill/driver to fasten it down with composite decking screws in pilot holes, driven no closer than 1 inch from the edge of the deck board. When pre-drilling composite boards, you'll notice that some shavings of composite material will probably pull out of the hole. I used those composite shavings to cover the countersunk heads of the deck screws—softly tap in the shavings with a hammer; it works like a wood plug.

The rest of the boards required no pre-drilling. Instead, each deck board has a 3/16-inch channel along both edges in which to install hidden metal fasteners. Timbertech's ConceaLoc fastener system uses two-sided metal hangers that operate similarly to wood biscuits. However, instead of



To begin demolition of the decking, I cross-cut the first board with a recip saw.

Once it was cut, the board pulled up easily with a small pry bar.



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The first new composite board was installed flush with the outside edge of the deck. The first board was fastened to the framing with square-drive composite decking screws.

using glue, a decking screw is driven through the center of the metal hanger at a 45-degree angle and into the joist. The screw applies pressure to the hanger to tighten the board against the joist. Move to the next joist and repeat along the length of the deck board. The opposite sides of the fasteners will insert into the groove of the following board. Just line up the next board, slide its groove against the hangers, and tap the board until the joint closes in a tongue-and-groove fashion—l

KEY ADVANTAGES OF COMPOSITE DECKING

There are a few key advantages of composite decking versus pressure-treated wood decking, but none more important than low maintenance. Low maintenance is a big reason many consumers choose composite decking over wood decking. With composite decking, homeowners don't need to worry about splinters, staining and annual upkeep. Maintaining a composite deck is simple—just wash the deck with a mild detergent once or twice a year or as needed, and that's it.

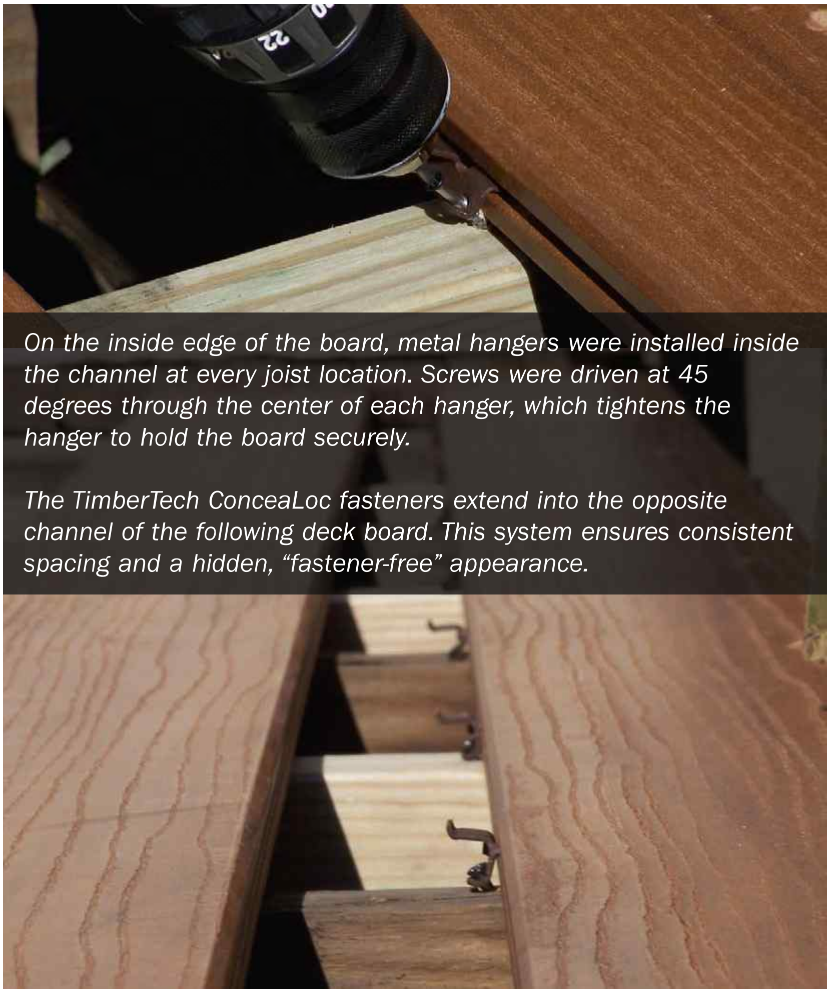
One major reason composite decking is low maintenance is that it does not take in or give off moisture, therefore it does not shrink or swell like wood. As a result, composites do not crack, warp or separate due to varying weather cycles. Composite decking resists insects, does not need water repellant or stain and can hold up to extreme weather conditions for decades. In addition, builders like to use composite decking because it cuts and installs like real wood.

Many composite decking products, like the Latitudes brand, offer matching decking and railing colors that complement a home's exterior siding. Latitudes also offers a reversible, woodgrain/brushed finish, which is slip-resistant. Also becoming increasingly popular is composite decking with a pre-grooved/slotted plank that helps showcase a fastener-free appearance.

—Chris Fox
Marketing Manager
Universal Forest Products

used a hammer and scrap deck board to do this. (It may help to tilt the boards so the groove easily slips over the hangers. However, my boards were each 18 feet long to avoid end joints and were too flexible for me to tilt by myself.)

Basically, I just repeated the installation pattern from one end of the deck to the other; install a new deck board, fasten all the hangers in place, install a new deck board, etc. Once I got on a roll, I made some serious progress. (And here's a tip on keeping up that progress: Invest in some quality knee pads.) When I got to the house-side of the deck, I had to rip some boards to width, including having to notch one board with a jigsaw to fit around a chimney.



On the inside edge of the board, metal hangers were installed inside the channel at every joist location. Screws were driven at 45 degrees through the center of each hanger, which tightens the hanger to hold the board securely.

The TimberTech ConcealLoc fasteners extend into the opposite channel of the following deck board. This system ensures consistent spacing and a hidden, "fastener-free" appearance.

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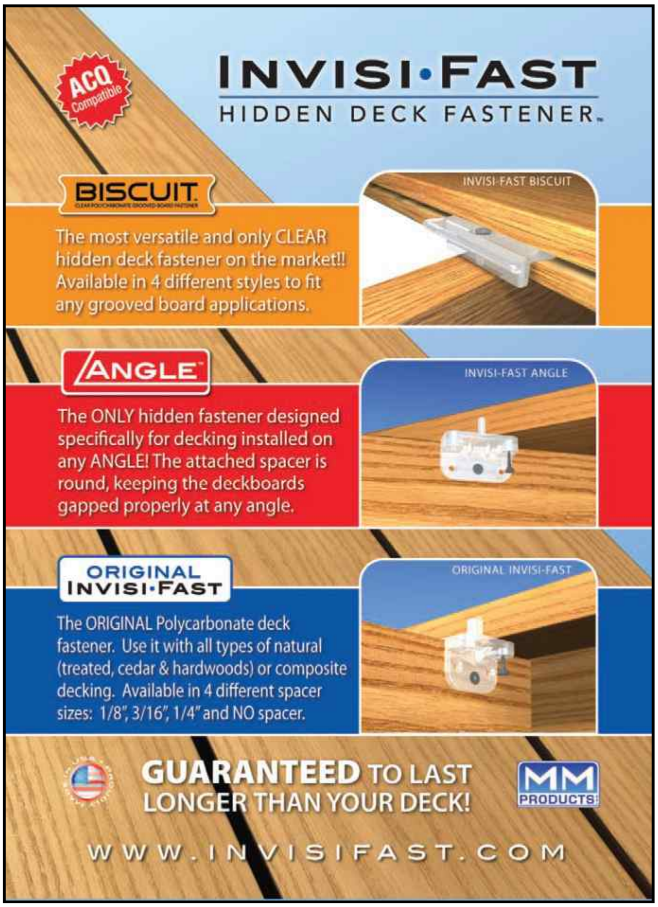

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A heavy-duty demolition bar called the Gutster made an easy chore of ripping up the old decking.

A lot of nails were left in the framing, which were duly pulled out and collected in a disposable Christmas tree cup.

Overall, the Timbertech fasteners proved to be a fairly easy and straightforward method for deck installation. And when the joints closed with no more than about 1/8 inch from board to board, the deck really did achieve a completely “nail-free” appearance with a clean, classy look.

EXTRA, EXTRA

Naturally, I ran into a couple of unexpected snags on this project. First, there was no flashing against the house. As a result, there was already evidence of wood rot at the deck intersection. So, I bent some aluminum flashing on a sheet-metal break and installed a channel beneath the siding along the top of the ledger board, to minimize further water damage. You won’t see photos of this step because I bent the flashing off site, and I was frustrated with the extra work so I didn’t fool with the camera. Sue me.

Another hang-up came with the discrepancy between the thickness of the deck boards. The old lumber decking was 1-1/2 inches thick. The new composites were only 1 inch thick. When I installed the new boards, they revealed 1/2 inch of unpainted siding along the bottom of the three walls surrounding the deck. To hide this I needed to add trim, and settled on a kind of makeshift base moulding for the deck. Here, I should interject that the homeowner decided to keep the existing wood handrail system (except the cap rail), with the intention to stain the wood to match the color of the deck. To match the base trim to the railing, I ripped some 2-by-2 trim pieces from 2-by-4’s on my table

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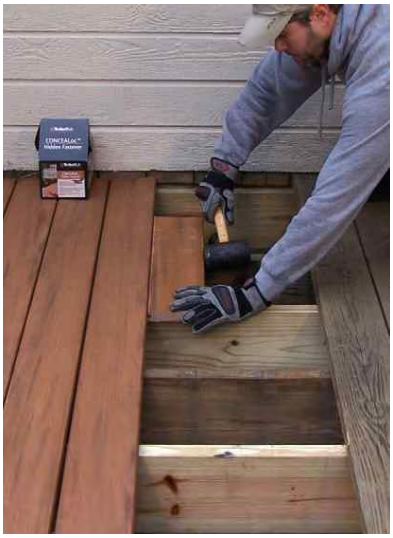
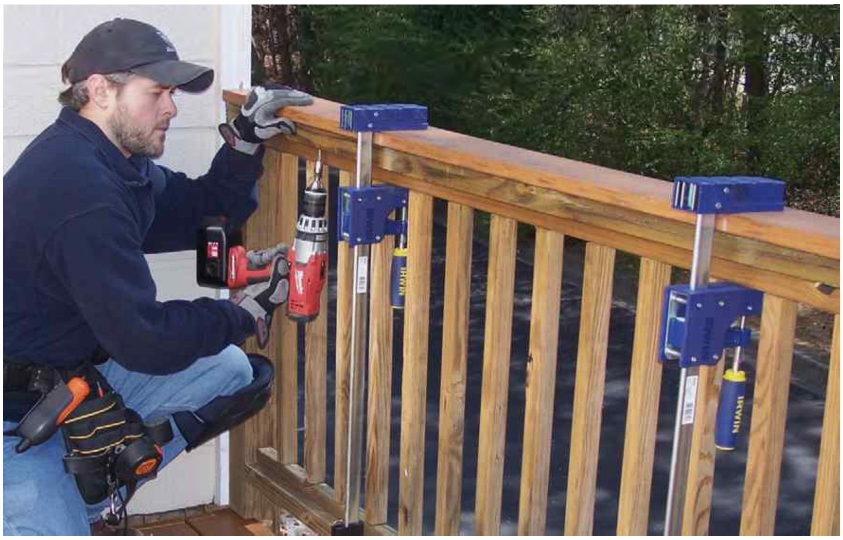


It may help to use a hammer and a scrap of decking to tap the boards together when closing the joints.



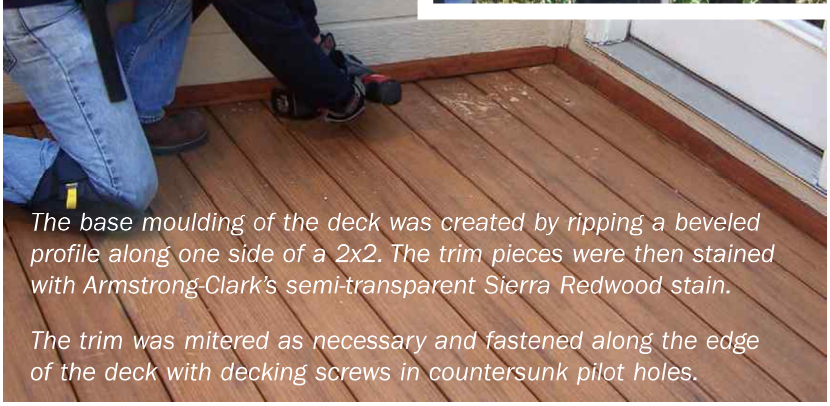
The homeowner chose to keep the wood handrail system and stain it to complement the new composite decking. However, the cap rail was in very bad shape, so it was replaced with composite.

On the "house" side of the deck, a few boards had to be ripped to width, and one board had to be notched to fit around a chimney.

saw, which would also be stained. I then ripped a bevel along one edge to ease the profile a bit. I used a miter saw to cut them to length and to cut all the 45-degree corners. Granted, base trim for interior applications isn't typically this bulky, but this was a deck, and I was trying to keep the wood thick and strong to resist warping from exposure. I was also relying on the protection of a high-quality wood preservative.

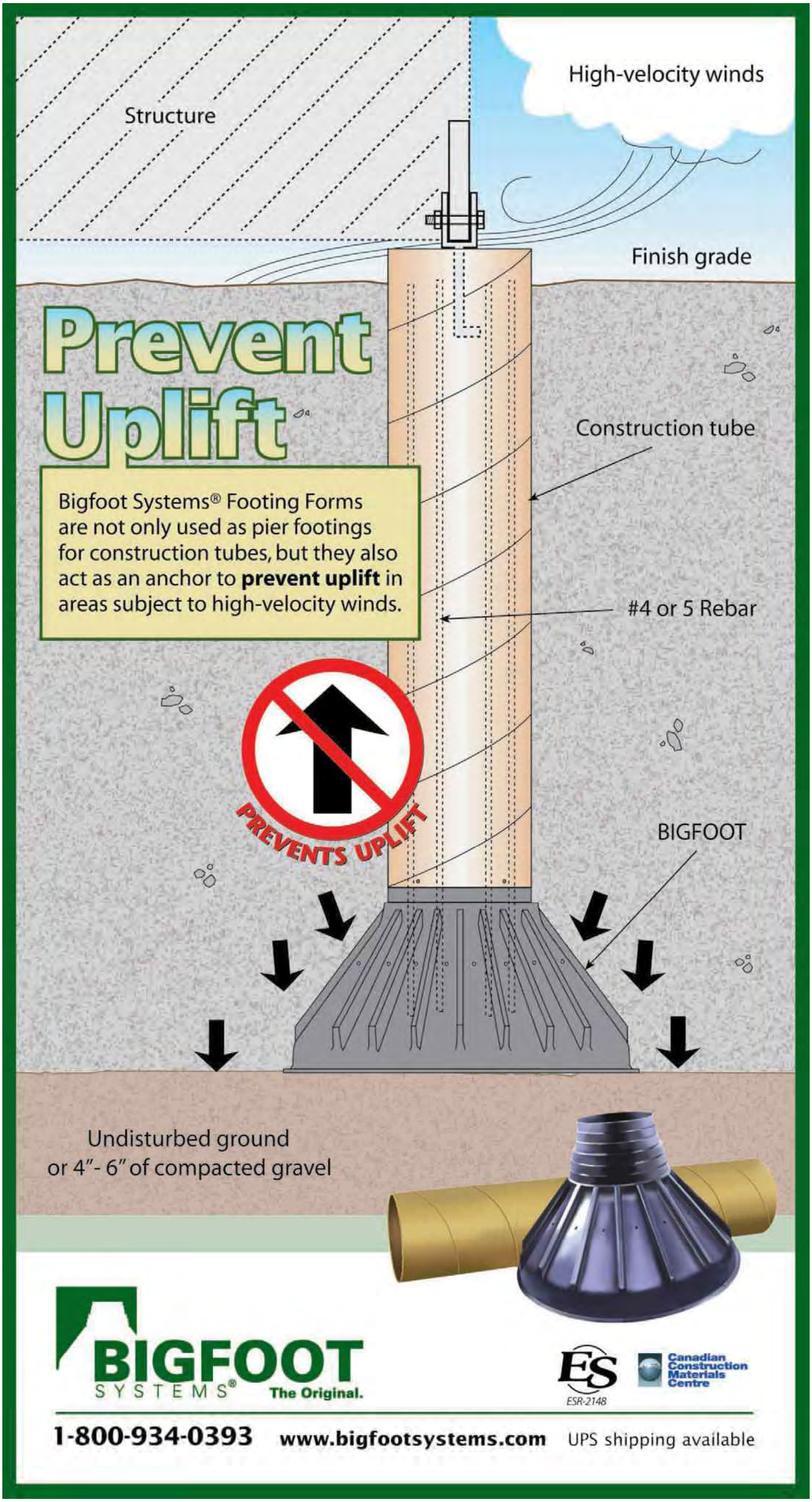
For the wood coating, the homeowner selected a semi-transparent Sierra Redwood stain from Armstrong-Clark. The EHT staff has used Armstrong-Clark's oil-based preservatives in the past, and they hold up well against water and UV-rays. The wood stain complemented the new composites very nicely, and I predrilled the base trim and screwed it in place along the edges of the walls. We then added a Timbertech fascia board to the outside edge of the deck and stained the handrail.

The finished project was a dramatic upgrade to the old, weathered lumber of the previously damaged deck. The new deck surface boasted a fresh, warm color and an uninterrupted, blemish-free surface thanks to the hidden fastener system. And just in time for summer. **EHT**



The base moulding of the deck was created by ripping a beveled profile along one side of a 2x2. The trim pieces were then stained with Armstrong-Clark's semi-transparent Sierra Redwood stain.

The trim was mitered as necessary and fastened along the edge of the deck with decking screws in countersunk pilot holes.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Here are some useful tips to ensure your footings are installed properly and the integrity of your project is maintained:

- You should always make sure that a qualified engineer has designed the footing you are using and that it has been tested by an accredited evaluation firm.
- Select a footing that can carry the weight of your new construction and has met all the proper building codes.
- Ensure you are placing the footing form on solid ground. The more solid the ground the less likely movement will occur.
- Install your footings 4-6 inches below the frost line to avoid potential movement. If you are in an area without frost, the footing form should be placed two feet in the ground and then backfilled to hold it in place when it is being filled with concrete.
- Rebar is an important part of installation. Pour concrete into the footing system first, insert three or four number 4 or 5 rebar rods into the tube. To determine the length of rebar, measure the distance from the top of the tube to the air holes located on the Bigfoot Systems® Footing Form before you place the system in the excavation and backfill.
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FUN IN THE SUN

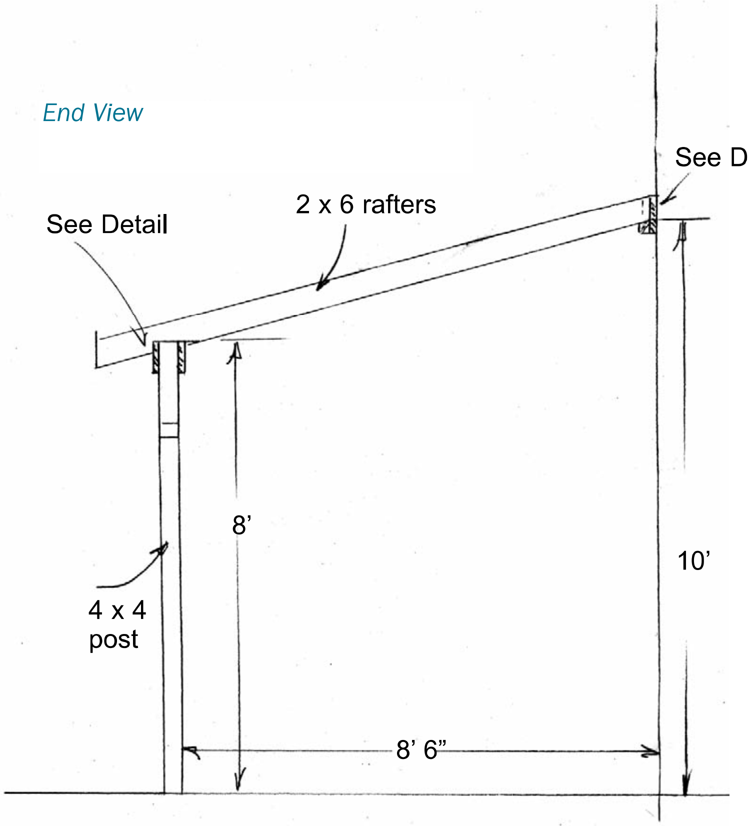
Protection and Fun—Create a Sunroof over your patio or deck.

By Monte Burch

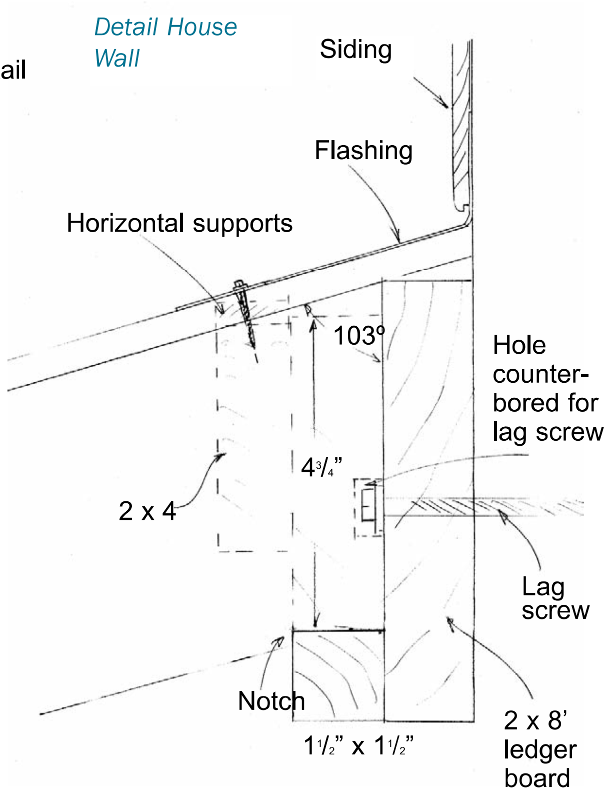
Decks and patios are a major source of America's entertainment and relaxing enjoyment, but they can be hot in the summer sun. They can actually be dangerous if they reflect the sun's ultraviolet rays. And running your grill during a rainstorm that arrives the same time as your guests can be a real frustration. One answer is a sunroof over your patio or deck. If designed properly, a sunroof can cut the summer sun, but still allow winter sun rays to warm the house. The sunroof shown is a typical do-it-yourself project, placed over a wood deck, although sunroofs can also be constructed over patios as well.

USE THE RIGHT MATERIALS

Because these projects are always exposed to the weather, the sunroof shown was built of Wolmanized Residential Outdoor wood to match that of the deck. The wood is southern-pine, pressure-treated with a copper azole preservative. This produces long-time protection against termites, decay and has a lifetime limited warranty. The wood was also "re-dried"—an extra feature that provides extra benefits at a small cost. When wood is pressure-treated, it is saturated with a liquid solution of preservative. As the wood dries, it shrinks. That's normal for wood. Treated wood can be re-dried at the treating plant; this may be done naturally through air-drying, or more commonly, in a kiln. If re-drying is



End View



Detail House Wall

done, this is indicated on the lumber’s end tag by ADAT (for Air Dried After Treatment) or KDAT (Kiln Dried After Treatment). Drying makes the wood lighter in weight, ready for immediate painting and able to meet building codes (when applicable) for dried material. Perhaps more important, factory drying is done under controlled conditions, unlike the drying that takes place in a project when one side of a deck may be exposed to hot sun while the other faces moist earth. As a result of the uneven drying, the lumber can warp (twist, cup or bow).

Not all wood treaters offer redrying, and many dealers do not sell it because of the extra cost. However, it is an option worth consideration for homeowners who wish to avoid exchanges and warped lumber, or who wish to paint their wood without waiting 6 to 12 months for it to dry.

The framing of the sunroof was finished with Sikkens Cetol SRD one-coat wood finish in Cedar tone to match the existing deck and blend in with the Western Red Cedar siding of the house. Sikkens is an easy-to-apply, one-coat oil and alkyd resin formula that provides protection from exposure to sun, rain, sleet and snow. And it also acts as a barrier to ultraviolet sun rays, providing further protection and longevity to the wood. Treated wood must be absolutely dry before Cetol SRD is applied—a main reason for the re-dried wood. The finish was applied to each board and allowed to dry before construction. This not only kept the mess from the deck, but provided extra protection to all the wood surfaces.

The covering for the sunroof is Sequentia Super600 from Crane Composites. The company has several products, and it’s important to consider your area’s year-round weather conditions when choosing a covering. The amount of snow, rain and wind you receive, as well as the intensity of the sun and range of temperatures are all factors. The house shown is in the Missouri Ozarks where the saying is, “If you don’t like the weather today, just wait, it will change tomorrow.” And it does, with temperature ranges from over a 100 degrees F to well below zero. And heavy rains, heavy snow, hail and high winds are all common. Sequentia Super600 is a heavy-duty, commercial-grade fiberglass with a 20-year warranty. It features heavy-duty fiberglass reinforcement and has UV-resistant properties. The Sequentia line-up comes in clear plus six colors; white, terra cotta, sky blue, yellow, graphite, green and beige. Terra cotta was chosen to blend with the treated wood finish and the Western Red Cedar siding. The color is a beautiful translucent that provides moderate light transmission and low heat transmission.

PLAN THE RIGHT DESIGN

The homeowners wanted a sunroof that would not only provide shade for relaxing and entertaining on the deck, but also provide more protection to the exposed south wall of the home and the large amount of glass in the window and two patio doors. The owners,

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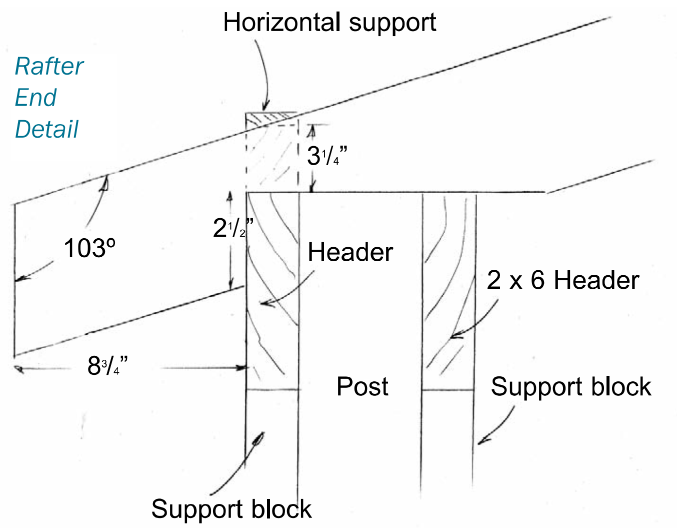

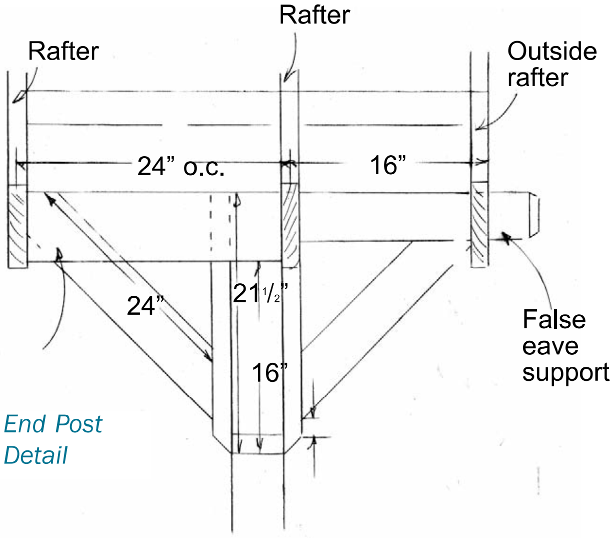

however, enjoyed the solar warmth created in the winter, so the roof was designed to provide some sun reflection during the low-angle sun location of the winter months. The result is a sunroof that begins at 10 feet high on the house wall, is 8 feet high at the outside edge, and extends 10 feet from the building. The sunroof shown is 40 feet long. This also allowed for using standard materials, including 10-foot panels of Sequentia Super600 roofing. Before you begin construction of your sunroof, make sure to check local building codes on similar construction, materials and specific construction details. Also check for local zoning requirements and any permits needed.

GETTING STARTED

Construction of the sunroof framing is fairly straightforward, but it’s extremely important to get the framing square with the building. Otherwise the panels may not align properly, increasing or decreasing in the distance they extend from the rafter front edges. To determine the exact location and proper 90-degree angle for the corner posts in relation to the house wall, use a plumb bob on the wall to locate the first outside rafter.

First step is layout. Locate the beginning edges of the sunroof on the house wall and use a plumb bob to mark the location.

Two methods can be used to ensure a square construction. The first is to locate the corner post locations with a tape measure, and then measure diagonally between a corner post and the opposite starting point on the house wall. Measure the other corner post diagonally to the opposite starting point on the house wall. Adjust the post locations until the measurements are the same. You can also use the “triangle” or “3-4-5” method. Measure 4 feet on the house wall. Attach a string line at the starting point and with someone holding the string line, measure and mark 3 feet out from the house wall on the string line. Move the string line in or out until the measurement between the two is 5 feet. Extend the string line to the outside location of the corner post. This creates a 90-degree angle.

A homemade 3 x 4 x 5-foot square makes it easy to lay out post locations square with the building.

A ledger board is attached to the house wall to anchor the rafters. Siding must be removed behind the board location and high enough to allow for flashing to be installed. Deck screws temporarily fasten the ledger board in place. Make sure the ledger board is installed level.

Because I frequently lay out buildings, I’ve constructed a

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Drill starter holes and anchor the ledger board solidly in place with galvanized lag screws into the 2x house framing.

lightweight wooden triangle of those measurements. I can lay out the squared building quickly and easily with the triangle. Manufactured squares are also available for this chore. Once the corner post locations are determined, run a string line between them and mark the inside post locations.

SUPPORT & FRAMING

The posts should be set on slabs and footings, and supported according to local building code regulations. In the project shown the posts were run through the deck to concrete supports below, and fastened to the under deck cross-member supports as well. The posts should be fastened to concrete slab/footings using approved steel anchor bolts. Use a 4-foot level and temporary bracing to hold posts in a plumb, upright position during construction. In the project shown, once the posts were plumbed they were anchored to the under-deck supports. You might wish to check into the Bigfoot Systems concrete tube forms for pouring supports.

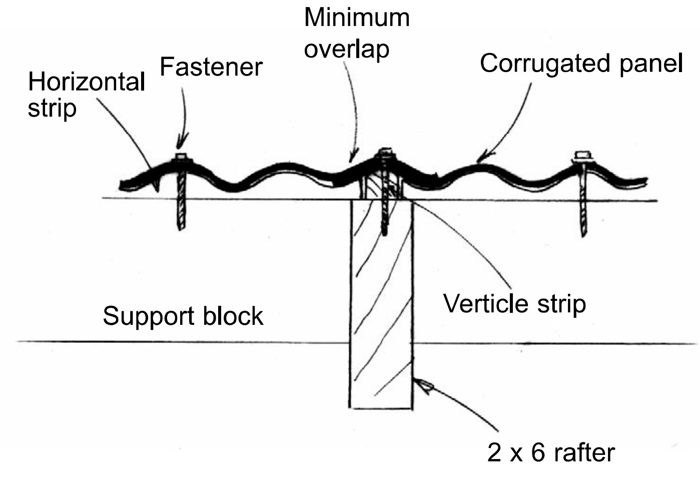
The house end of the rafters is supported on a ledger board. Remove the house siding from the ledger board location. In the case shown, the house was being resided and siding was installed up to the ledger board location. The ledger board was installed, leaving space for the roof covering and flashing, and siding installed above the ledger board. The bottom siding board is temporarily fastened in place in order to insert the metal flashing needed for the roof covering. The ledger board was leveled using

In the case shown, the house was being resided with Western Red Cedar. After ledger board installation, the siding above the ledger board is installed.

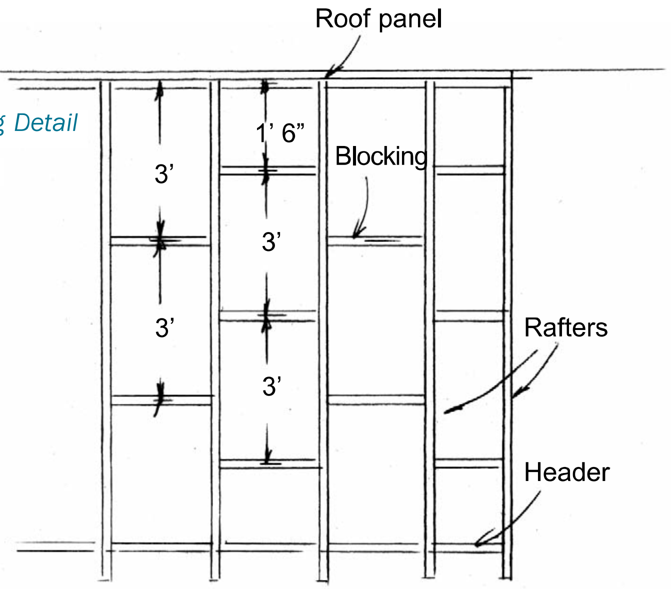
The sunroof shown is built over a deck. Post locations are marked on the deck using a scrap piece of 4 x 4 post.

Starting holes are bored through the deck, and a saber saw or jigsaw is used to cut out openings for the posts to fit down through the deck.

Roof Panel Detail



Roof Blocking Detail



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The posts are lowered down to pre-cast footings, then plumbed and anchored in place to the footings and to the under-deck supports.

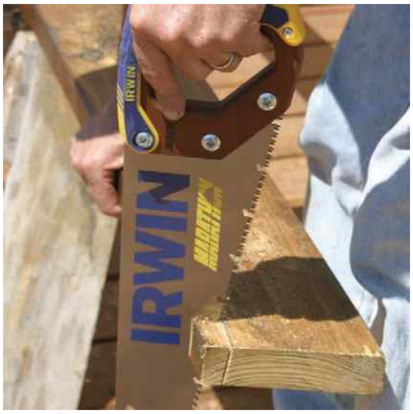
a string-level for initial location, and then a 4-foot level to adjust as needed. Three-inch deck screws were used to initially fasten the board in place, and then lag screws were installed into the 2-by framing of the house wall. If fastening to masonry walls, use appropriate wall anchors. The fasteners should be installed on 16-inch centers as required.

All fasteners used with pressure-treated lumber must be corrosion-resistant. Phillips II High Performance DuraFast Coated screws recommended for pressure-treated lumber were used for all construction fastening. After years of pressure-treated lumber construction, these are my recommended fasteners. The box comes with a driver head that matches the screws and there is very little head stripping. A 2-by-2 support strip is fastened to the bottom edge of the ledger board to provide support for the rafters.

All pieces are cut to shape, then prefinished before assembly with Sikkens Cetol SRD one-coat wood finish in Cedar Tone.

The project shown is attached to a bungalow type house that has 4-by-4 eave supports on the gable ends. To blend with the house, a "fake" eave support was constructed and screwed to the outside posts. The first or outside rafter rests on the outer end of this support. The remaining rafters are supported by headers fastened in place to both the inside and outside of the posts. These were located with their tops 8 feet from the deck. They must be level, and you will probably need two people for this chore. Two-by-four supports are added to the inside and outside of the posts to hold the headers. A 4-by-4 diagonal brace fastened to a 2-by-4 support piece anchors the headers to the posts and provides bracing and support.

Rafters are laid out and straight cuts are made with a portable circular saw.



A notch in the house side provides a means of resting the rafter on a support strip.

As with laying out square, getting the first rafter laid out and cut properly is extremely important. I like to use a "scrap" but straight board to cut the first rafter. It should be cut and tested, cutting until you get the correct angles and cuts. Once the trial rafter is cut, and temporarily installed, again make sure the rafter and house wall are perpendicular or at a 90-degree angle. Mark the location, remove the trial rafter and use it as a pattern to cut the first rafter. After cutting, recoat any cut ends with protective finish. Install the vertical panel support strips on the rafter tops using galvanized nails. A finish or brad nailer and galvanized nails makes this chore easy.

The sunroof shown is designed to complement a bungalow-style house with eave supports. False eave supports are made in the shop.

Temporarily install the first and second rafters. The rafters are

The false eave supports are fastened to the outside posts.

The first rafter is installed against the house wall and resting on the false eave support. The rafter is squared with the house wall and anchored to the eave support.

A house-wall filler block is installed and the flashing installed.

located on 24-inch centers. The outside rafter is anchored in place with a screw from the underside of the 2-by-2 support block into the underside of the rafter end. A 22-1/2-inch filler block is placed inside and next to the outside rafter. Fasten the inside rafter against the filler block with a screw from the underside of the support strip. Use a scrap piece of roofing panel on the outer end to test for fit and precise rafter location. Check on the house end as well. Then slide the flashing up under the siding and test it on the roof panel and rafters. Once adjusted so it all fits properly, permanently anchor the rafters in place with screws through the rafters and into the filler block. An outside filler block is also required and a horizontal cross strip must be fastened to the top of it. The outer ends of the horizontal cross strips must match the crown profiles of the vertical edge strips. Again, fasten with brads or galvanized finish nails.

The headers are fastened to the posts, making sure they are plumb, and a support block is screwed to the post below them.

I fastened the filler blocks in place by first pre-drilling pocket-hole screw holes on the back side using a Kreg Pocket Hole tool. Anchor the block between the two rafters and then screw the rafters into the filler block. From this point on, it's a matter of positioning a rafter, then screwing it to the outer ends of both filler blocks.

An inside support block with a 45 diagonal 4 x 4 fastened to it is anchored to the post.

Then the headers are anchored to the diagonal braces.

The outside filler block has pre-drilled holes using a Kreg Pocket Hole tool. Horizontal panel supports are cut to length and fastened on the outside filler block and the inside filler blocks anchored to the tops of the headers.

Interior filler blocks, again topped with horizontal cross strips, are placed between the rafters, spaced as shown in the drawing on page 53.

You can install the rafters, then cut and fit the individual interior filler strips in place, but on a job of this size, I found it more convenient to "pre-assemble" the components. First, all filler blocks were cut to precise lengths using

Vertical support strips are fastened to the tops of the rafters.

The rafters are anchored to the ends of inner and outer filler blocks.

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It's easier to pre-assemble the rafters and one set of inner filler blocks, adding the vertical and horizontal support strips.

The corrugated paneling is easily cut using a portable circular saw with blade turned backwards.

The panels are placed in position and holes drilled for the fasteners. A small amount of caulk is applied in each hole, and the galvanized screws with neoprene heads are driven in place.

a Ridgid Exactline Compound Miter saw supported on their new Miter Saw Utility Vehicle support. The Repeat-A-Cut fence and a stop block made it quick and easy to cut all strips to precise lengths, as well as the horizontal panel support strips. All strips were then fastened in place. The interior support strips were fastened to the rafters before erecting the rafters. This was easier for the location than working from a ladder. The rafters were fastened in place, and the loose ends of the interior support strips were anchored to the mating rafter. You may need two people to lift and fasten these assemblies in place.

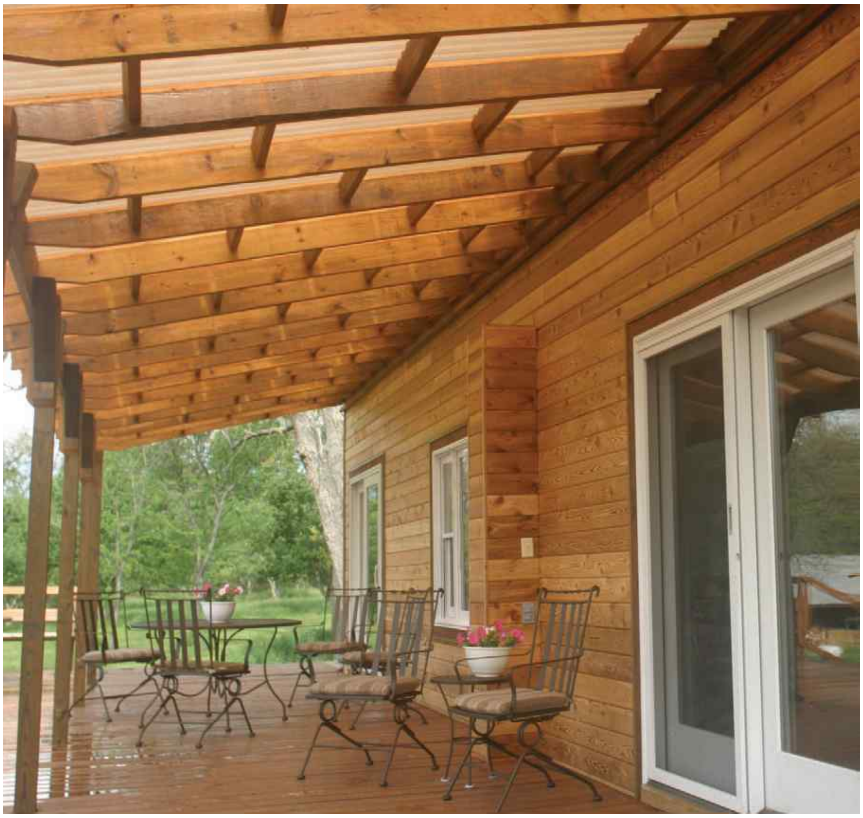
An additional 2-by-4 filler block with horizontal cross strips is installed against the ledger board and serves as an anchor for the end of the corrugated roof panels and the metal flashing.

ROOF ASSEMBLY

Install the first panel, making sure it fits precisely over the vertical support strips on the rafters. Start the first panel at the leeward end of the run and work windward. Provide a minimum of one corrugation overlap at the sides. Provide 8-inch end-laps for roofs with pitch less than 4/12; 6-inch end laps for pitches greater than 4/12. Fasten the crowns of the panels at every second corrugation. Fasteners with armored neoprene washers are recommended. Space fasteners 6 to 8 inches on-center along the panel edges, and 12 to 16 inches on-center for intermediate rafters and blocking. To avoid deflection of the panels, tighten the screws until the washers will not rotate, and then tighten one more turn. Avoid excess burrs on drilled or punched holes to protect the neoprene sealing face.

Always pre-drill panels and molding strips before securing them to your framework to prevent cracking or splitting. To help ensure a weatherproof roof, apply a small amount of clear sealer at each hole before installing the fasteners. Under no circumstances should panels be allowed to support undistributed loads such as the weight of a human body. Use only approved roof ladders and planking.

Now it's time for a cool, relaxing drink under your new sunroof. **EHT**



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Mark Villers uses a tree his crew placed in the McKenzie River as a foot bridge to pull the haywire line, which will help position the big wire rope for the next tree. Large trees provide cover and hold gravel for spawning beds in efforts to restore native fish populations.

DON'T GET STUMPED

The Fine Art of Tree Pulling

By Larry Walton

Trees; as much as we love them, sometimes we need them not to be where they are. Sometimes they are right where we want to build a new deck, or put in a circular driveway, or hit a six iron to a front pin placement. Sometimes we want them to become lumber, furniture, firewood and bark mulch.

Just as there are a variety of reasons to remove a tree, there are a number of ways to get the job done. Sometimes a tree is very near a house, fence, neighbor's shed or your wife's precious flowering plum (which looks like a horticulture experiment gone wrong). These trees require some thought and technique to get them down without destroying their surroundings.

Then, there are those that seem ready for felling, like they're just itching to feel the bite of a chainsaw.

STUMP JUMPIN'

Whoa there chopper! ("Chopper" is a nickname for tree fallers and buckers in Northern California. We call them "cutters" in Western Oregon.) Before you fire up the chainsaw, let's think about the stump pulling opportunity you may be missing here.

When a tree is intact, still standing and attached to the root system, you have at your disposal an amazing amount of stored energy to remove a good portion of the root system and the stump along with the tree. However, if you

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cut it down, you're left with a "now-what-to-do-with-the-stump" situation.

There are times when leaving a stump is okay. You may want to use the stump for anchoring a guy-wire, or carve it into a bear-shaped planter in the front yard. If you are harvesting timber and will be replanting, stumps and the attached roots are an excellent way to stabilize the ground against erosion while the little trees take root.

But for those times when you are clearing land to build a structure, put in a driveway or plant a garden, you don't want to be left with stumps. There might be a way to handle that age-old mass of wood without dynamite, which, by the way, was once a common method of handling stumps.

How can a tree help dig up a stump? Have you ever dug a hole with a shovel? It works like that. You stick the shovel in the ground and pry back on the shovel handle, which acts as a lever exerting enough force to displace the dirt. A tree still attached to its root system can do much the same thing. Get the tree to come down and out comes a good portion of the root system—no stump!

SOMETHING FISHY

The best way I know to do this is called tree pulling. On the "extreme" end of the scale, one of my good friends, Mark Villers, owner of Blue Ridge Timber, pulls down large trees as part of his business. Most of Villers' tree pulling is done to place "big wood" in Pacific Northwest streams, which helps fish biologists re-create natural stream conditions for fish habitat.

Leaving the root wads attached, that is leaving the trees intact, does two things for these fishery projects. First it looks natural, as though a storm caused the trees to fall. Second, the root wads help keep the trees in place when high water

Splash Down! Blue Ridge Timber scores a perfect hit with a big fir tree on the McKenzie River using professional tree pulling techniques.

Jeramiah (sic) Winger keeps a close eye on the lines of the multi-drum tree puller he operates for Blue Ridge Timber.

SOFTER SOIL

Conditions vary greatly. Small trees are easier to pull, larger trees require bigger equipment. Soil composition and tree design are also factors. Some trees have root systems that spread out while others have long tap roots.

You can improve the chances for success by cutting some roots and loosening the soil around the stump. Saturating the ground with water can help make the soil softer as well. I've seen a lot of trees come down in wind storms after the ground had been soaked by weeks of heavy rain.

If you can get to bigger trees with a bulldozer or a backhoe, that can be effective at getting to some of the roots as well. Be careful, because it's often possible to bring a tree down with heavy equipment and you don't want any surprises. An operator on one of our jobs knocked over a big maple tree without knowing he had a large root under one of the tracks of his machine. Tree went down, root went up, machine went on its side. Kinda cool to see, but not recommended as a pastime.

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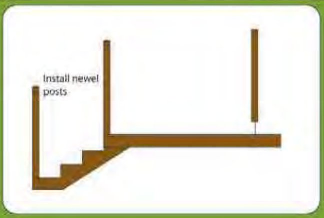
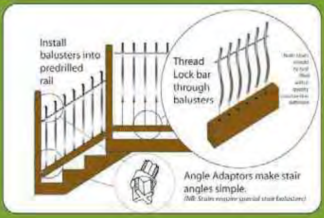

Install newel posts


Install balusters into predrilled rail
Thread Lock bar through balusters
Angle Adaptors make stair angles simple.
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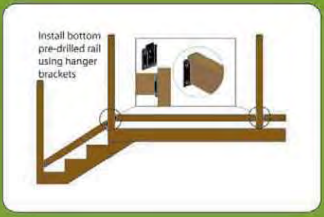
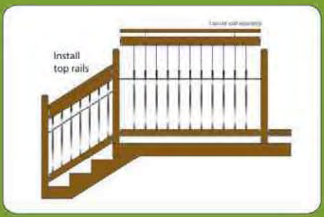

Install bottom pre-drilled rail using hanger brackets


Install top rails

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Tuscany

Simple to Buy

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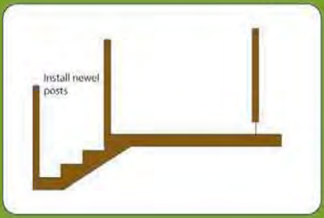
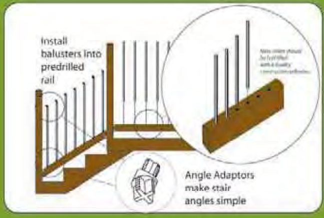
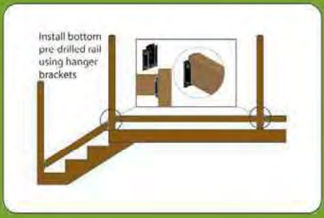
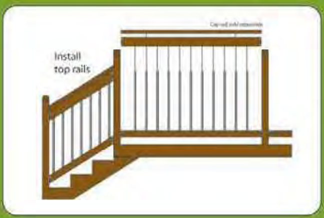

Install newel posts


Install balusters into predrilled rail
Angle Adaptors make stair angles simple


Install bottom pre-drilled rail using hanger brackets

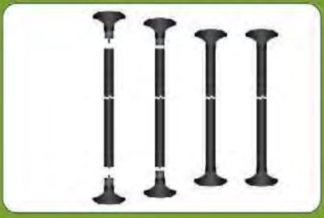

Install top rails

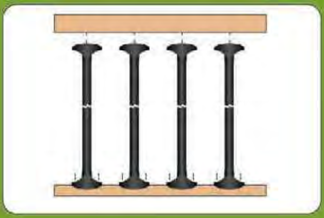
Simply Beautiful

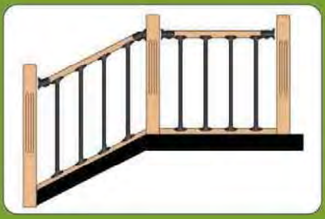
Traditional

Simple to Buy

Simple to Install







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DON'T GET STUMPED

Winger climbs to about 50 feet before attaching a chocker to a tree destined for the river.

We pulled a small madrone tree with our Polaris Ranger.

levels would otherwise wash them down stream.

The crew at Blue Ridge uses logging techniques, including large winches mounted on big rigs, to pull down trees as large as 50 inches in diameter and 150 feet tall. Precise tree placement puts the trees in the water, which creates fish cover and holds back gravel to create fish-spawning areas.

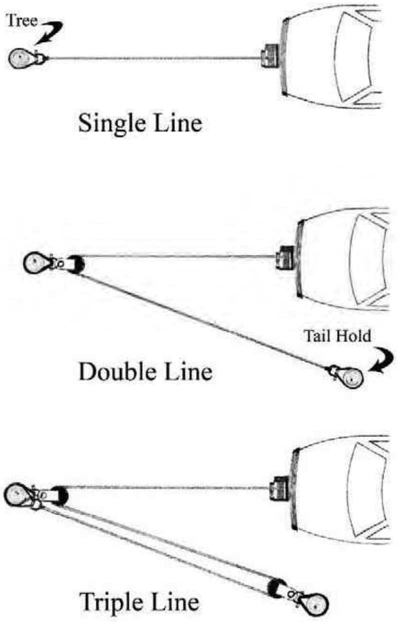
For those of us who want to remove smaller trees without leaving a stump, applying Villers' techniques can be a great way to save a lot of time and effort.

PICKUP POWER

If you don't have a logging yarder parked in your backyard, then you will probably want to use your pickup. Of course, the same principles apply for your ATV or tractor, it's really just a matter of how big the tree is.

One of the things I learned while logging was that I always had more pulling power with the winch than with the drive train of the vehicle. This was true for bulldozers and rubber-tired skidders, when moving logs to the landing for loading on log trucks. Whenever a turn on logs got bound up on stumps or wedged in the terrain, you could spool out a little winch line and bring them past the tough spots with the winch.

Sometimes the limiting factor in pulling with a vehicle is traction, but it can also be sheer power. Hydraulic and electric



Doubling or tripling the lines to the tree you are pulling can significantly add to your winch's pulling power.

SHORT WORK FOR SHRUBS

My brother and I watched my neighbor cut, chop and dig on some shrubs for about a week. He was actually doing something on his property I was planning to do on mine. One afternoon my brother and I drove right past him, wrapped a winch cable around my shrubs and pulled them out, roots and all, with a solid tug of my truck.

My neighbor was a bit ticked, but hey, he had all of that exercise and a few nice blisters to show for his efforts. So our tree pulling techniques work for shrubs, too. Give careful consideration to irrigation pipes and phone lines around the house.

EXPLOSIVE EXTRACTIONS

Blowing massive fir stumps out of the ground with explosives was common in Western Oregon's timber country when I was a kid. Loud explosions in the surrounding hills were little cause for alarm. In fact, you could buy dynamite at the local logging supply store with no questions asked. One time a neighbor came by looking for blasting caps. He came back a few hours later to borrow a ladder for roof repairs, which gives a whole new meaning to "rock the house."

winches just produce more torque. No winch? You can give it a go without one. It's a power-to-weight ratio thing. If your truck is big enough and the tree is small enough, it'll work.

HANG 'EM HIGH

According to Villers, you need to hook the trees high, which makes a lot of sense to take advantage of leverage. On conifers with a single main trunk and smaller branches, he suggests you go up about 1/3 the height of the tree. You'll have to wing it on trees that fork out until the main trunk disappears. Don't get so high that the tree is skinny and weak. You don't want the top breaking out.

Although you're not concerned with damaging the tree, do not hook the winch line back onto itself which can damage the line. A strong logging chocker is a good way to attach to the tree because it cinches onto the tree and will not drop down.

You can also use a strap and shackle. Placement above a branch can prevent slipping to help keep it in place. Just be aware of the right way to use the strap. Do not thread one loop through another to cinch it on the tree. This creates a weak spot.

DOUBLE DOWN

A single line pull is simply a line run directly from the winch to the tree. You can nearly double the pulling power on the tree by using a double line set up. Run the winch line through a pulley attached to the chocker on the tree and anchor it to a tail hold near the vehicle.

A triple line layout provides almost three times the pull as a single line setup. The winch line runs through a pulley on the tree strap, back through the pulley on the tail hold and then back to a second strap on the tree.

TUGGING TECHNIQUE

When I've watched Villers and his crew do this on big fir trees, he has his yarder operator bring the lines tight and give the tree a good solid pull. Then he slacks it off. This process is repeated several times to loosen the soil. When the tree comes down, the winch operator slacks the lines, and the tree is removed. **EHT**

We used the backhoe attachment on Ron Apling's tractor to loosen things up when removing a view-obstructing fir tree.

After pulling the fir, we gained some elevation to buck off the root wad.

Decked Out with Accessories

Decorate your outdoor living space.

Amenities such as sunshades and heating systems can add both form and function to your deck.

Decks aren't just for summer anymore. These days, comfortable "outdoor living spaces" allow homeowners to enjoy the outdoors year-round. Complete with such amenities as heat lamps, overhead sunshades and built-in seating, a summer-only deck quickly becomes an all-season outdoor living space with all the sophistication, look and feel of an inside room.

A well-designed and appointed outdoor living space can be a comfortable spot where the family can enjoy quality time together throughout the year. And with many stylish, durable accessory products available to enhance the comfort and convenience of backyard relaxing—the end result is a space that not only extends your living area, but also lifts your spirits.

"The outdoor room is definitely becoming more than a seasonal space," says Peter Lang, general manager of the Western Red Cedar Lumber Association (WRCLA). "And just like every other room, homeowners can easily create an enjoyable locale with a few simple additions and some thoughtful planning."

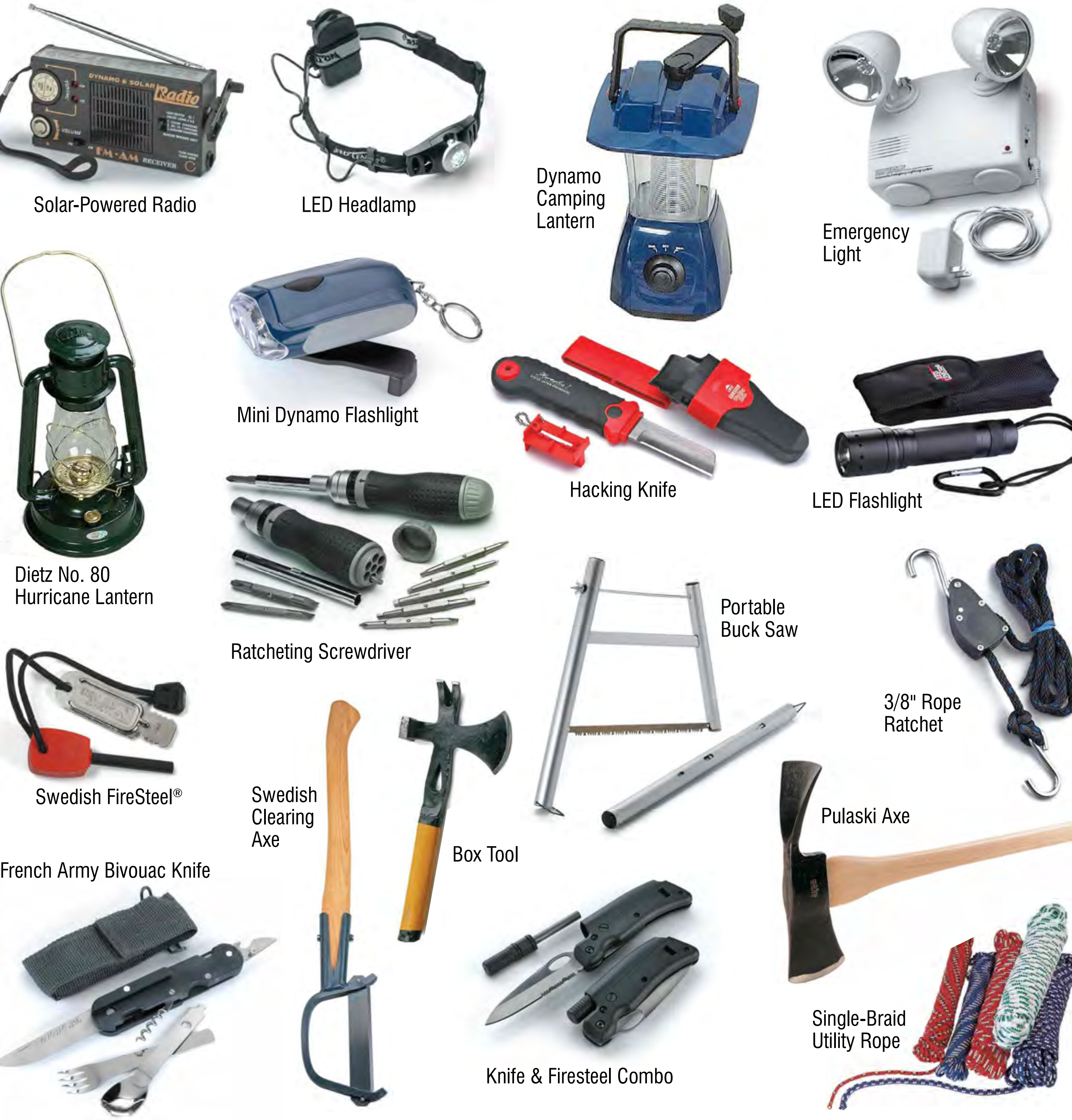
Taking the time to incorporate some decorative and functional elements not only adds aesthetic flair, but also provides that cozy feeling to help extend the outdoor season year-round. When inserting these elements into your outdoor living space, consider the following deck accessory ideas:

MOVING UPWARD

When temperatures rise, glare and heat can deter backyard worshipers inside on summer afternoons. To help resolve this, many homeowners are incorporating sun-filtering structures atop outdoor living spaces. These "sunshades" let you enjoy the outdoors on even the warmest days, while providing protection from harmful UV rays and direct sun heat. Sunshade areas provide an ideal blend of shade and light—perfect as a retreat or a shady spot to cool off before going inside.

A nice touch to your sunshade is the addition of decorative canopy board ends. To create a custom end, finalize your design on construction paper and use it as a template to transfer your design to each board end. To ensure consistency, be systematic and symmetric in applying this decorative design to each canopy board. The possibilities are endless, but choosing decorative flair to complement the architectural feel of your house while matching any deck railing designs will add to the overall appeal.

Being Prepared is just a click away...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INCORPORATE NATURE

One of the easiest ways to brighten and improve any outdoor living space is with window and planter boxes made from all-natural Western Red Cedar. These stylish boxes are simple to build and can dress up your front or backyard when filled with colorful flowers, herbs, vegetables, etc. Best of all, the vegetation can be easily updated to keep the look fresh.

SEATING & RAILING UPGRADES

One of the most popular decking trends involves adding stylistic upgrades throughout the entire decking area. For example, built-in Cedar benches are a great way to utilize longer stretches of decking with unobstructed views—while adding both style and function to the deck.

Decorative railings also offer a stylish, yet easy option when upgrading any deck. Incorporating railings allows you to create distinctive and unique designs, distinguishing your deck from others. And be sure you use one design throughout for a unified look.

Additionally, placing some weather-resistant furniture just outside the main deck entrance provides a smooth transition between indoor and outdoor spaces—inviting guests to move freely between each space. For a cohesive look, choose furniture cushions that visually tie the interior and exterior together.

ALL (WARMED) HANDS ON DECK

When the night air turns cooler, patio heaters are great amenities to warm things up. These metal-clad space heaters are an increasingly popular means to extend the enjoyment of outdoor living well into the evening, while creating a warm glow for year-round ambience. These cost-effective heat sources radiate heat downward to warm a 12- to 20- foot area, and can be located almost anywhere. Best of all, they're safe, dependable and easy-to-operate.

Weather-resistant furniture can help smooth the transition between the outdoors and indoors.

SWIRLING WITH SPAS

No matter where you live or what the temperature is outside, immersing yourself in a spa provides a relaxing way to get away from it all. There is nothing quite like lying in a bubbling spa, being massaged by gentle jets of water and looking up into a swirl of snowflakes. And these days, an endless combination of spa sizes and features are available to match every lifestyle.

You may consider installing some privacy screens and seating around the spa area as well. Built-in benches offer a place for people to hang out,

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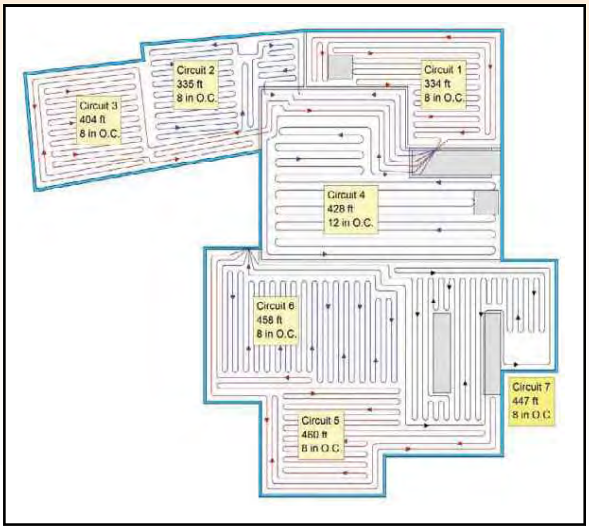
Circuit 2
335 ft
8 in O.C.
Circuit 1
334 ft
8 in O.C.
Circuit 3
404 ft
8 in O.C.
Circuit 4
428 ft
12 in O.C.
Circuit 6
458 ft
8 in O.C.
Circuit 7
447 ft
8 in O.C.
Circuit 5
480 ft
8 in O.C.

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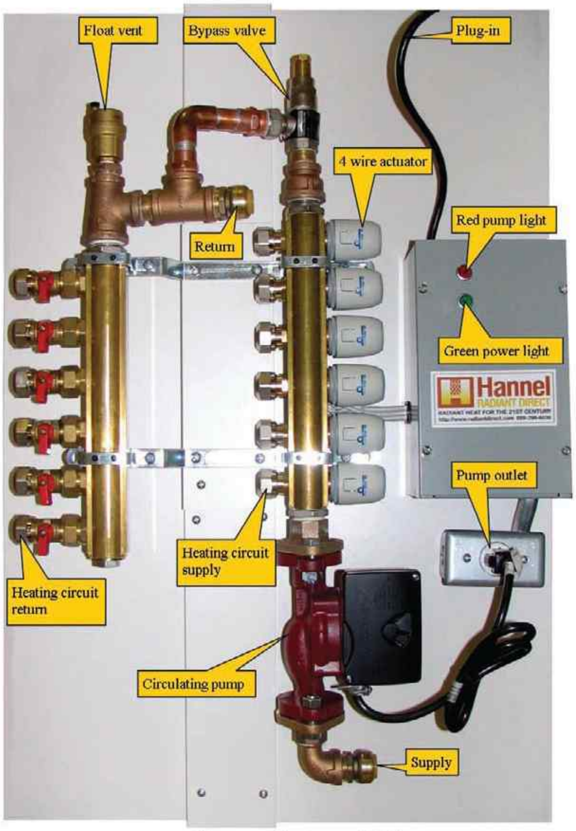
Float vent
Bypass valve
Plug-in
4 wire actuator
Return
Red pump light
Green power light
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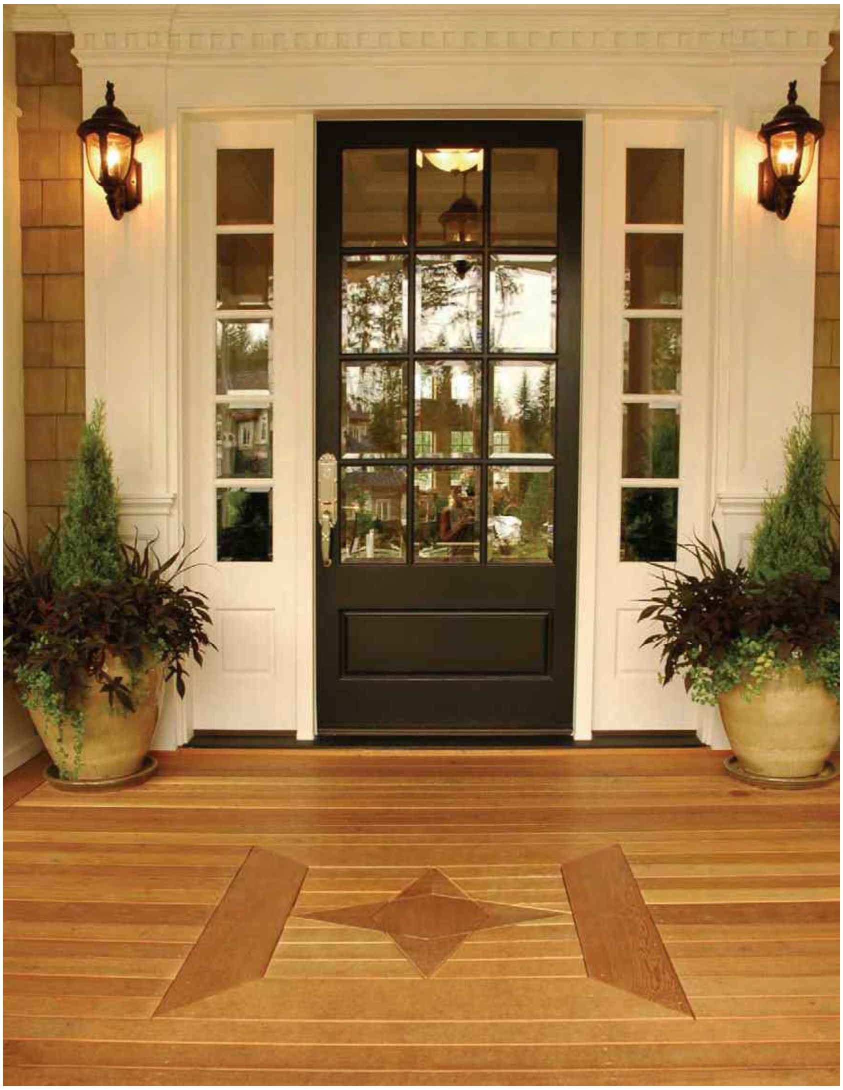

Decorative deck board designs can add a truly unique look.

and they dress up the entire decking area.

DECORATE FROM THE DECK UP

Speaking of dressing up decking areas, one of the best ways to instantly bring all-natural warmth and beauty to any outdoor living space is by using Western Red Cedar decking. Western Red Cedar adds character, balance and elegance to outdoor spaces—and provides a synchronized blend of all-natural materials that accentuates the natural surroundings yet gives the impression the outdoor space is an extension of the inside.

In fact, a unique way to accessorize the actual decking floor is to change the deck board direction; an angle change or unique board pattern provides the subtle indication that you're in a separate deck area.

"Many of my customers are requesting distinctive board designs lately. One of the most requested is an octagon inlay underneath a cedar table," says Tim Meisch, owner of Custom Cedar Decks in Mill Creek, Washington. "It's so unique that people often mistake it for a decorative rug." Another advantage of cedar: Not only does it exude all-natural charm and beauty, it is environmentally friendly and sustainable—in addition, many homeowners choose cedar for its natural resistance to mold and mildew.

Additionally, recent advancements in UV blockers/inhibitors utilizing "nano" technology have significantly improved some cedar coatings. WRCLA affiliates such as Weiss Coatings are on the leading edge of this technology and have developed a product called "Solar Shield." A combination of UV blockers, wood stabilizers and hi-performance resins have recently come into the market helping Cedar remain more "low maintenance" than ever before. The UV blockers break-down much slower, allowing for increased protection against the sun. More effective wood stabilizers help the wood retain its all-natural appearance, and the hi-performance resin holds the finishing system together for increased protection. The end result deters the natural weathering process, protecting the Cedar for 5 to 10 times longer than before. For more information on Solar Shield, contact Weiss at 1-888-810-9240.

And there are several other, less obvious reasons why Western Red Cedar remains a favorite decking material as well. First, the color of all decking materials will gradually fade when given long-term exposure to the sun's UV rays.

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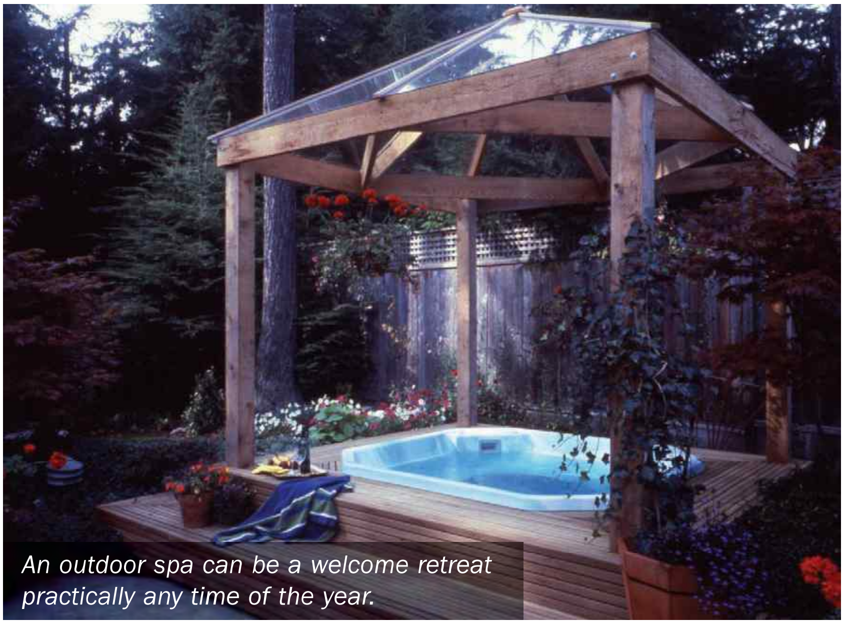
Sunshades break up the light for a cool place to relax.

With plastic or composite decking, this color fade is irreversible. Deck owners must live with color differences that appear over time between sun-exposed and shaded areas of their original deck.

Fortunately, there is no such downside if you are building a deck from cedar. Unlike plastic or composites, real cedar decks can be restored and refinished, providing a decking surface that looks virtually new. In addition, the surfaces of a Cedar deck can be touched up with sandpaper and stain to remove the inevitable “dings,” scratches and stains of a well-used deck. Such emergency repairs are bound to be necessary over the life of your deck, but with most plastic or composite materials, they’re often not possible.

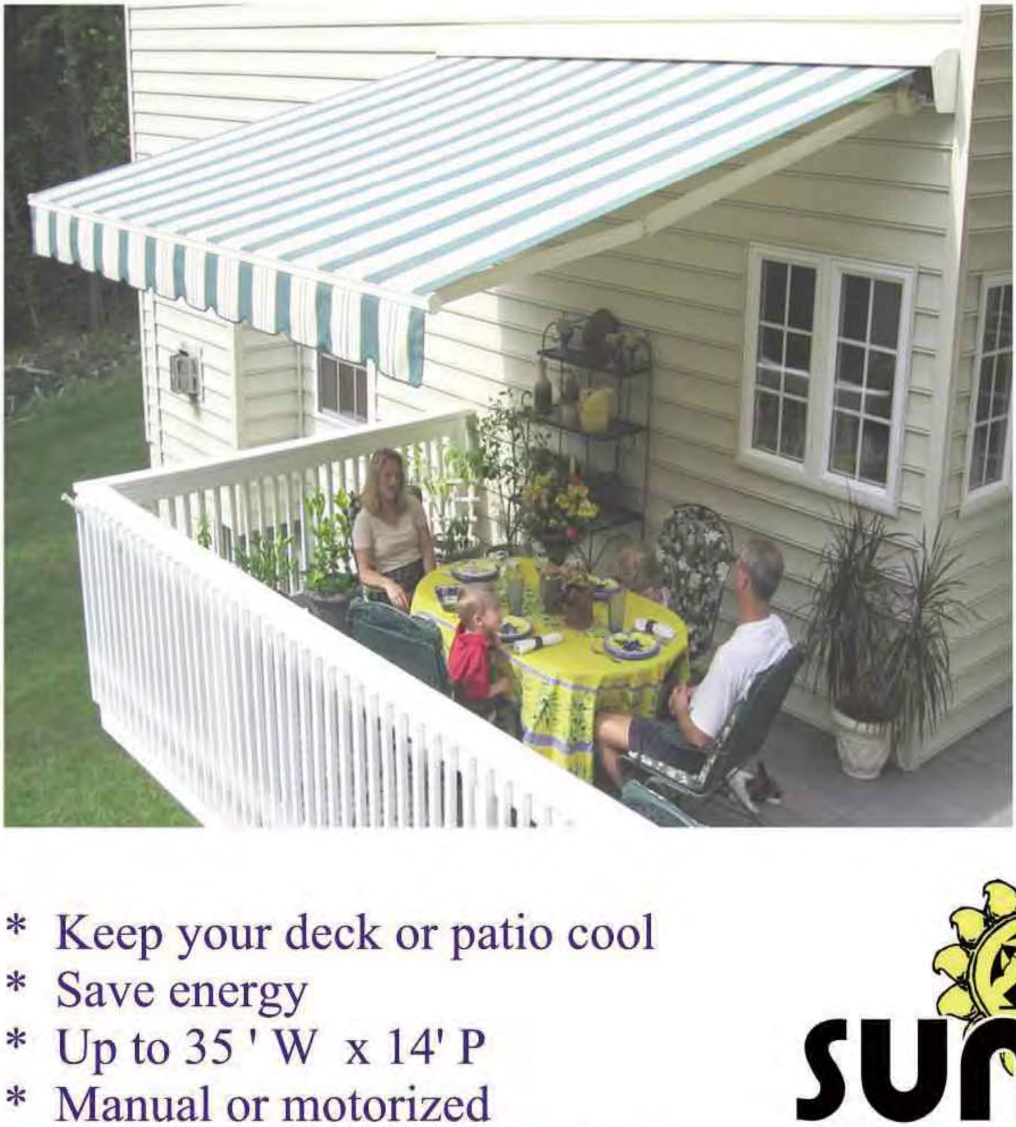
With the right planning and some decorative touches, you’ll be able to create a safe and relaxing outdoor paradise that will become a welcome respite from the hectic pace of everyday life—regardless of the season!

For more information on making your outdoor living space a reality, go to www.realcedar.org or call 1-866-778-9096. **EHT**



An outdoor spa can be a welcome retreat practically any time of the year.

RETRACTABLE AWNINGS



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Jessup, MD Phoenix, AZ

Tax Credit Details for Energy-efficient Windows

Slider windows allow air to flow through the home.

Q: What are the details of the new consumer tax credit for qualified energy-efficient home improvements related to windows?

A: Under the new law, when taxpayers purchase replacement windows that meet specific energy efficiency requirements, they are eligible for 30 percent of the amount returned in as a tax credit. This credit is capped at $1,500 for the years of 2009 and 2010.

Q: What are the restrictions of this tax credit?

A: This law has some very specific restrictions. It's important to note the following:

1. Windows purchased must be equal to or below a U Factor of 0.30 and a Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) of 0.30. (Note: these are NOT the same factors as Energy Star qualifications, so homeowners will need to specifically check on the U Factor and SHGC ratings of the windows ordered.)
2. The purchase of the qualified windows must be made during the taxable year for which the credit is being claimed.
3. The credit is only allowed on the price of the qualified windows themselves, not on installation costs, onsite preparation, assembly or sales tax.
4. The tax credit is allowable only for qualified window units placed in service in 2009 and 2010.

Q: What is the timeframe for this program?

A: The credit is provided for all qualified windows purchased and installed in 2009 and 2010.

Q: What exactly is a tax credit?

A: Unlike a tax deduction that only reduces the amount of your taxable income, a tax credit reduces the amount of tax you owe.

Q: What kind of windows must I purchase to be eligible for this tax credit?

A: Energy efficient windows that have a glass package equal to or below a U Factor of 0.30 and a Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) of 0.30.

Q: What is a U Factor?

A: This is the amount of heat transferred through a material. The lower the U-value, the slower the rate of heat flow and the better the insulating quality of the window.

Q: What is Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC)?

A: SHGC is the percentage of heat gained from both direct sunlight and absorbed heat. The smaller the number, the greater the ability to reduce solar heat gain into the home.

AN EXTRA $1500 NEVER HURT ANYONE.

ENERGY-EFFICIENT SIMONTON WINDOWS CAN HELP KEEP MORE MONEY IN YOUR POCKET.

Help reduce heating and cooling costs, increase your curb appeal and help boost your tax return. The new U.S. government stimulus plan provides up to $1500 in tax credit to homeowners for installing energy-efficient replacement windows – which makes this the perfect time to purchase Simonton windows!

SIMONTON
WINDOWS®

Simonton Windows is a registered trademark of Simonton Building Products, Inc. Simonton Windows is not a legal or tax adviser. For further details on the energy tax credit, visit the IRS website.
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For details, visit **simonton.com/taxcredit/eht** or **call 800.746.6686.**

Shown is an energy-efficient Simonton bay window.

Q: Do I have to purchase ENERGY STAR® qualified windows to get the tax credit?

A: No. You should specifically ask for a U Factor of 0.30 (or below) and a SHGC of 0.30 (or better) when purchasing a window that qualifies for the tax credit. These are different energy efficient specifications than Energy Star qualified windows have.

Q: Who must I purchase these windows through?

A: As long as the windows meet the qualifications set forth by the U.S. government for energy efficiency, you may purchase the windows from any source. Simonton recommends you select a window product backed by a strong warranty from a company with a solid history and track record for exceptional service.

Q: Once I purchase the windows, what do I need to save in order to request the tax credit?

A: You should save your receipt for the window purchase along with all window labels that come on every window.

Q: When will I get my tax credit?

A: If you purchase your qualified windows in 2009, you can submit to receive your tax credit on your 2009 taxes. If you purchase your qualified windows in 2010, you can submit to receive your tax credit on your 2010 taxes.

Q: Is there an advantage to purchasing energy efficient windows for my home over other energy efficient products, such as increased insulation or a heat pump?

A: Yes. Along with immediately helping to reduce your heating and cooling bills from the day they are installed, energy efficient windows add to the beauty and curb appeal of your home. When selecting vinyl windows, they also allow for low maintenance to make your life easier. Energy-efficient window replacements provide immediate added value to your home, your energy bills and your lifestyle.

Q: Which windows does Simonton offer that meet the requirements for the tax credit?

A: A complete listing of Simonton windows meeting the requirements for the tax credit are listed at www.simonton.com/taxcredit.

Q: Why should I purchase Simonton windows for my home?

A: Founded in 1946, Simonton has a long and solid reputation for offering top-quality windows. The company offers a strong warranty on all its products and has a wide variety of styles, sizes and options available for homeowners nationwide.

Simonton is part of the very successful home and hardware division of Fortune Brands, which includes Moen, Therma-Tru and MasterBrand Cabinets. The stability of Fortune Brands assures consumers that we have the solid support of a major company behind us.

When considering a window brand, consumers should think about which companies are consistently rated highest by builders and remodelers who purchase and install windows on a daily basis. Simonton ranked "Highest in Builder and Remodeler Satisfaction among Residential Window and Patio Door Manufacturers" in the J.D. Power and Associates 2008 Builder and Remodeler Residential Window and Patio Door Satisfaction Study. The company was ranked #1 in quality in the 2007 Brand Use Study sponsored by *Builder* magazine and has won three Best In Class Awards from Market Research Associates.

Q: How do I locate a Simonton dealer?

A: To locate a Simonton dealer in your area, go to www.simonton.com and use the "Dealer Locator" button. You may also call 1-800-SIMONTON for assistance. **EHT**

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A little sander solving big problems, the new Micro Zip Sander from Ali Industries is just 3-1/2-inches by 1-inch. It's the smallest hand sanding tool on the market today and gives the user the ability to sand comfortably in the tightest spots without the fatigue and soreness that you get with hand and finger sanding. And, it features hook-and-loop sandpaper and the Gator Finishing System with its number- and color-coded sandpaper ID system, making it easy for anyone to use the right sandpaper grit every step of the way. It has an ergonomic shape so it's easy to hold, creating less user fatigue. Plus, it is made of the same durable, high-density foam material as the original Zip Sander, which means it is tough and stands up to daily shop use. Each Micro Zip is packed with 30 sheets of hook-and-loop sandpaper, 10 each in grits for stripping (80 grit), sanding (120 grit) and fine finishing (220 grit). Refill packs are also available. Visit www.zipsander.com.

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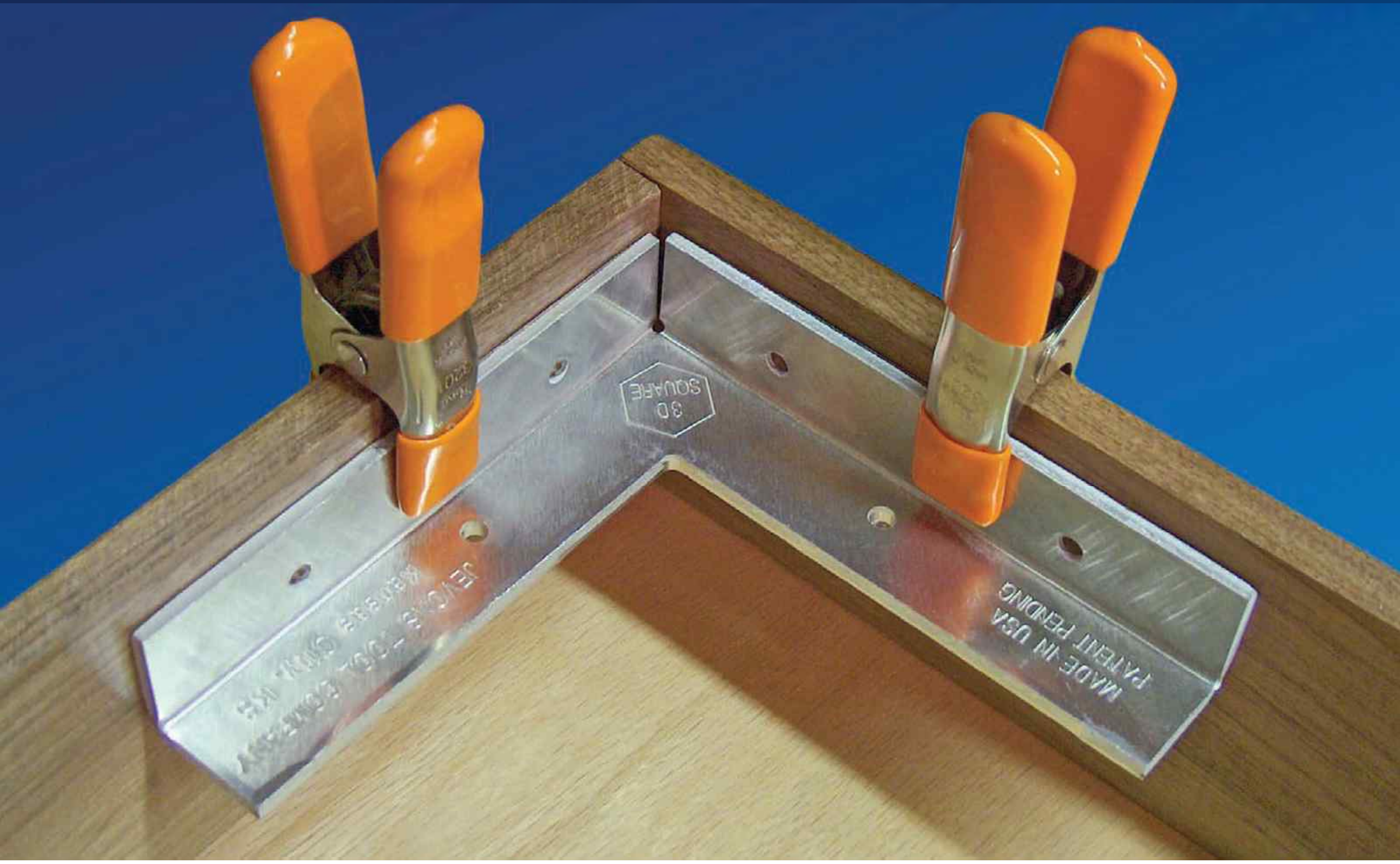

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The new Rockwell SoniCrafter is a multipurpose tool that tackles a wide range of remodeling tasks. The 2.3-amp, variable-speed SoniCrafter saws, scrapes, sands, grinds, cuts, polishes and more. The tool's Microsonic technology moves blades and other accessories side to side at an incredible rate of 20,000 oscillations per minute. It can sever nails, but is extremely safe and precise because it uses the same technology employed by medical cast saws. Skip the chisel when cutting mortises or making other hard-to-manage cuts; the SoniCrafter's end-cut blade will breeze right through the project. Remove old grout from bathroom tiles, or scrape leftover adhesive from a sheet vinyl floor. The SoniCrafter can make intricate plunge cuts with precision, as well as sand away rust from bare metal for priming a trailer. The tool's multi-accessory head accepts triangular shapes for sanding and polishing, carbide rasps, and circular and square-nosed cutting blades. The tool weighs less than 3 pounds, features a light-weight, magnesium gear housing, an extra-long 10-foot power cord, and a soft-grip comfort handle with on/off slide switch. Visit www.rockwelltools.com.

WRAP-N-STRAP

Wrap-N-Strap is an easy-to-use cord securing device that makes quick work of managing items as small as MP3 player earbud cords to large air and water hoses. This inexpensive rubber fastener quickly and easily bundles the cord/cable/hose into a compact appendage, out of the user's way, and out of the way of other tools and appliances. Its most unique and useful feature, according to hundreds of customers, is that the Wrap-N-Strap stays attached to the cord, so there's never any risk of misplacing it. The Wrap-N-Strap is offered in six sizes, 4, 6, 9, 12, 18 and 24 inches to solve any cord problem. Colored straps are available to quickly identify specific groups or types of cables. For more information, visit www.wrapnstrap.com.

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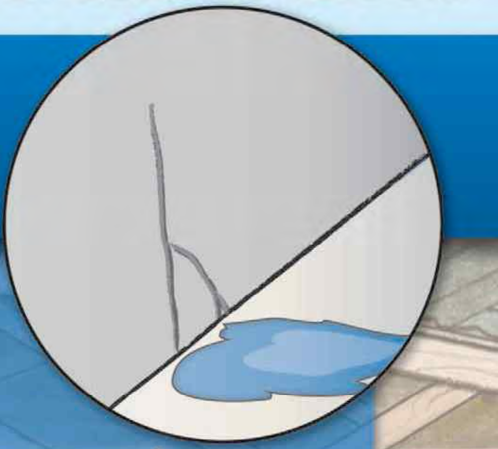
WATERPROOFING

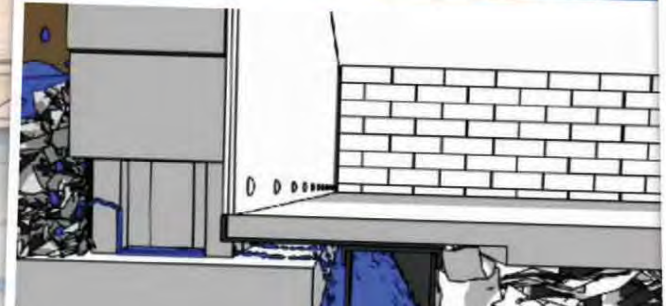


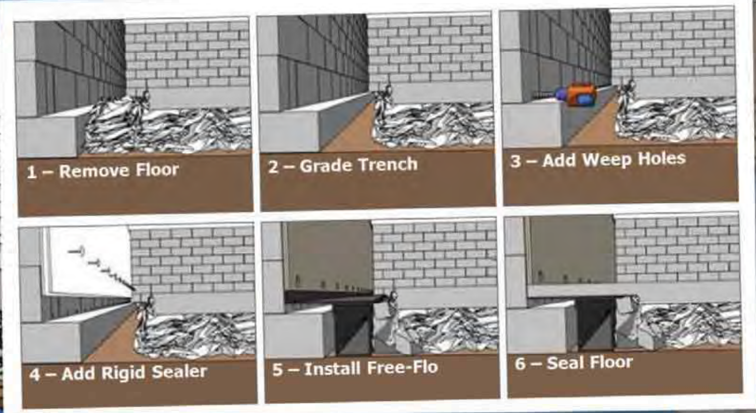
The Permanent Waterproofing Solution

Too many contractors offer to waterproof your basement only to repeatedly 'repair' and 'maintain' their 'permanent' solution. Unfortunately, for over 70% of our customers the only thing permanent about these experiences have been the headaches!

Don't be fooled by imitators offering a lifetime of patch-jobs. A waterproofing solution must stop water at every turn, and only B-Dry has been offering the combination of zero maintenance and perfect performance since 1958. It is your ultimate solution for stopping all water leakage, including water from wall cracks, mortar joints, bleeding & sweating through materials, floor cracks, and under & over the footing. B-Dry backs its work with the strongest warranty in the business.

Use this test as a standard for comparing the patented B-Dry Solution against all others: if the waterproofing method doesn't stop ALL the ways water can enter your foundation, basement or crawlspace it is NOT permanent. Why waste your time or hard earned money on expensive temporary fixes? Get the only permanent waterproofing solution on the market today, the B-Dry Waterproofing Solution.





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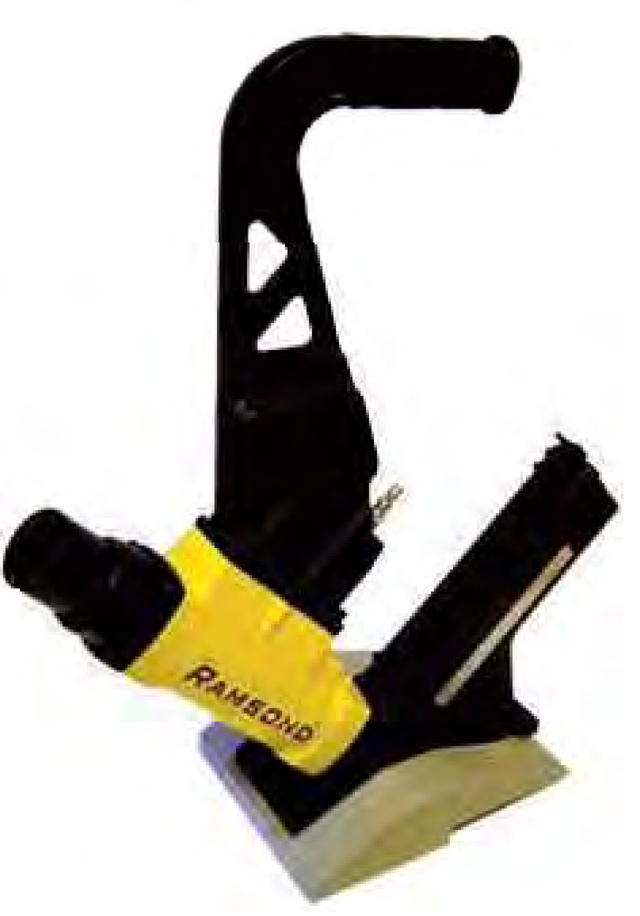
THE ORIGINAL

NAILER *Shoe*

Introducing the latest innovation in hardwood flooring installation for the trainer, store owner, home handyman or the professional. The Original Nailer Shoe® gives you the edge in reducing wrist fatigue, eliminating damage while installing, and increasing productivity. The Original Nailer Shoe® is designed to work with several popular floor nailers and staplers, and conversion is done in seconds. Made of a space age, high impact polymer, the Original Nailer Shoe® weighs less than 17 onces and can be used with thicknesses from 9/16 to 33/32 inches thick.



See it in action in this video!

The nailershoe moves the impact of the nailer from the top edge of the hardwood down to the tongue, eliminating top edge damage as well as holding the tongue in place while nailing brittle material like Bamboo.

No more shimming to accomodate different thicknesses!

Say goodbye to stress cracks from installation!

Elliminate wrist fatigue!

A must have if you are considering putting in hardwood

The Original Nailer Shoe® conversion supports the following floor nailers and staplers:

- Bostitch/Stanley MIII Floor Stapler (model no: MIIIFS)
- Bostitch/Stanley MIII Floor Nailer (model no: MIIIFN)
- Powernail Models 445 tounge and groove pnematic
- Powernail 45/45 R manual nailers
- Porta Nail (models:Portamatic 470TL & 472S)
- Eagle floor staplers
- Prime floor staplers
- Hi Pro floor staplers
- Central Pneumatics
- Ramsond RMM3, Hardcore Tools and V02Max Combo Stapler/Nailer
- Superior

www.originalnailershoe.com

HOT PRODUCTS

THE STRIKER CARBIDE UTILITY SCORE

The new Striker Carbide Utility Score allows easy scoring and snapping of a variety of building materials for both professional and DIY remodeling tasks. It features a sharp V-shaped carbide scoring tip designed to scribe deep and wide cuts with minimal force into fiber cement siding, backer board, roofing, linoleum, laminates, plastics and glass. By using the Striker Carbide Utility Score, contractors and installers can safely cut fiber cement indoors and in tight or remote areas, such as on scaffolding, without creating messy, hazardous dust. Additional features include a crosscut file along both sides of the hardened steel blade, allowing the user to smooth out any rough edges without pulling out a file or rasp. Serrations along the blade's top edge create a notching saw that makes quick work when cleaning out corners around plumbing, junction boxes and HVAC openings. The tool also features a striking cap at the end of its lightweight aluminum handle that acts like a hammer to allow the user to knock out cut pieces and set siding nails to the correct depth. Visit www.strikerhandtools.com.

RIP-R-STRIPPER HANDHELD FLOOR STRIPPER

The FCS5 Rip-R-Strippers from General Equipment Company are a handheld alternative to larger, walk-behind strippers, and are specifically designed for scraping floor coverings in confined spaces. With a cutting width of 5 inches, the FCS5 Series is ideal for use in closets, stairways, foyers and other small work areas where larger equipment is inefficient or difficult to maneuver. The Series includes two models: the FCS5AC and FCS5DC. Powered by a 1.2-horsepower electric motor, the FCS5AC is the most powerful floor-covering scraper in its class. The unit operates from a standard 115-volt power source and cuts at a rate of 3,000 oscillations per minute. The FCS5DC is powered by a rechargeable 18-volt battery and cuts at a rate of 2,400 oscillations per minute. The FCS5 Series removes vinyl composition tiles, sheet linoleum, rubber-backed carpet and a wide variety of mastics and adhesives. The random orbit blade action of the units maximizes material removal rates, while also reducing operator fatigue. Visit www.generalequip.com

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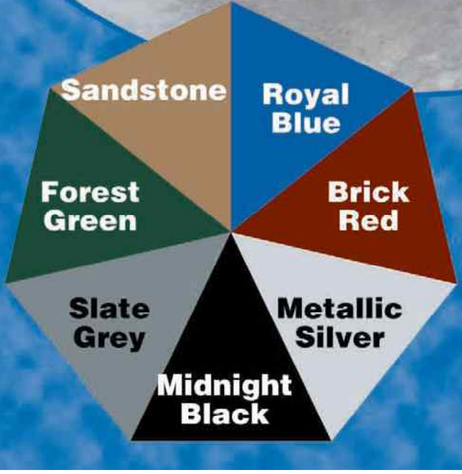
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11 Keys to Successfully Staining Exotic Hardwood Decks

Dave Barnes – Vice President, SaverSystems

Years ago it seems like every deck that was built was constructed out of good old CCA...pine wood treated with copper chromium arsenic, commonly referred to as pressure treated lumber. Because most of the decks were constructed out of the same type of lumber (CCA), the products that you used to stain them and the way you went about it were all pretty similar. But not today. Things have changed.

Over the past several years lumber yards have worked at carving out their own niches in the marketplace by introducing new species of woods to the market. Products such as Cypress and Mahogany, and rainforest hardwoods such as Ipe and Pau-Lope. These products offer an unequaled level of beauty and uniqueness as well as hardness and durability that far exceeds that of conventional lumber. These characteristics can offer huge advantages to the homeowner. However they also present a variety of challenges when it comes to staining.

Typically these types of woods are very dense, making it difficult for stains to be absorbed. Additionally, they can contain a high amount of natural oils making them resistant to penetration. For these reasons, they need to be treated a little differently when staining. That's not to say that they can't be stained, they just need to be treated a little differently. Don't fret though. I've outlined a few basics for you. "11 Keys" as I like to refer to them, that when followed, will help ensure that your project looks like it was stained by a Pro!

1. LET THE WOOD WEATHER

As I said in the opening, exotic hardwoods are dense and they can contain a large amount of natural oils that will work to block any wood stain that you try to apply from penetrating. So let Mother Nature help you out. Once your deck has been built, allow nature's elements to help break down the surface of the wood and dry it out so that stains will be more easily absorbed. The sun, the wind and the rain can do wonders. The more the wood weathers, the easier it will be to stain it and the longer your staining job should last.

2. START WITH A STRIPPER

Even if your wood is brand new and has never been stained, it is still a great idea to start your project off by applying a stain stripper, such as Defy Exterior Wood Stain Stripper. Stain strippers are formulated using sodium hydroxide. Sodium hydroxide is an aggressive chemical that can be very effective at breaking down the surface of the wood, opening up its pores and making it more absorbent. Remember, the more stain that you can get the wood to absorb, the longer your project is going last.

3. DON'T FORGET TO BRIGHTEN

Yes, you have to brighten the deck too, even if you're working with brand new wood. I know it seems kind of funny, having to brighten new wood but the brightener will do a couple of things for you. First, it will neutralize the effects of the stripper that you used previously. You always have to use an acid brightener after using an alkaline stripper. Secondly, in a similar fashion to the stripper, the brightener will also help to open up the porosity of the wood even further. Again, the more stain that you can get the wood to absorb the longer your project will last.

4. TAKE A GOOD LONG BREAK

Good news. You can take the rest of the day off. Take two if you like. The important thing now is to allow the wood to dry out from all of the cleaning you've just done. The drier the wood gets, the better it will absorb the stain. The more stain that you can get the wood to absorb the longer your project will last. So take a day or two off and let things dry off before you start to think about applying the stain.

5. NOT ANY OLD STAIN WILL WORK

Your next big decision is what stain to use. Don't screw up here. Not just any stain will do. Certain stains have been formulated for better penetration, making them ideal for hardwoods. Most manufacturers offer a product in this category. Defy Deck Stain for Hardwoods is extremely durable, water-based and Eco-friendly. It's both easy to use and easy on the environment. Whatever stain you select, make sure that you choose one that has been specifically formulated for use on exotic hardwoods and other difficult to penetrate lumber.

6. ASK FOR DIRECTIONS

For the female audience, I'm confident that you'll get this next step correct. However, all you men out there, ASK FOR DIRECTIONS. Everything that you need to know about the product that you are going to use is on the back of the can. Take a few minutes before you start and read it. The directions will make you aware of any particulars to the product that can affect how the job turns out. What is the dry time, how many coats should you apply, how much time between coats, is there a critical recoat time? There can be any number of things that you can pick up by reading the back of the can. Take a minute and read the directions.

7. BRUSHING IS CRITICAL

These next few keys are really important so please pay attention. First, regardless of how you apply the stain (e.g., rolling, spraying) it absolutely 100% must be brushed. If you roll it on first, simply back brush it in after it's rolled on but while it is still wet. The same goes for spraying. "Why must I go to all of that trouble?" you ask. When you brush the stain, the brush creates a friction on the surface, breaking the surface tension of the wood and working the stain in to the pores of the wood. You get a much better penetration of the stain. Remember, the more stain that you can get the wood to absorb, the longer your project will last.

8. WIPE OFF ANY EXCESS

Ok, this one might throw you a little, but again, it's important. If you apply too much stain to the wood (more stain than what the wood can absorb), wipe off the excess. We don't think twice about wiping off excess stain when we are staining interior wood. My advice is to do the same if you over-apply stain on exterior hardwoods. The reason is simple. First, for aesthetics. When you apply too much stain, it puddles on the surface and looks bad. Secondly, over time those spots are likely to flake and peel. So how much stain should you apply? Only as much as the wood can easily absorb.

9. LET IT CURE

At this point the deck is done. If you've taken your time and followed these steps, you've got a great looking project going. Don't mess up now, let things dry. Leave the furniture in the yard and the dog in the house while the stain has a chance to cure out. Come back tomorrow and put things back together. You'll be glad that you waited a day to do it.

10. MANAGE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Now here's some advice that I hope you accept. Manage your expectations. Remember, you've selected an exotic wood for your deck, a beautiful grade of lumber with extreme durability. Regardless of how good of a job you did in every step of this process you will never get the stain to last as long as it would on a more porous species of wood, such as pressure treated pine. But also realize that every time you stain it you'll get a little longer life out of your project. Time will continue to help the wood become more porous and as it does, it will absorb stain better each time.

11. KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS

Lastly, you've put in a great deal of time and energy to stain your deck the right way, so keep an eye on things. As time goes on and the stain begins to fade and wear down, apply a maintenance coat. Don't let things erode so far that you're forced to strip everything off and start all over. It's pretty easy and it doesn't take much time to simply rinse things off and apply a fresh coat of stain.

So that's it. That's everything. Eleven keys to successfully staining exotic hardwoods. Go ahead and try these eleven keys for yourself. See what the results are when you set out on your next project to do it like a pro. You might just surprise yourself!

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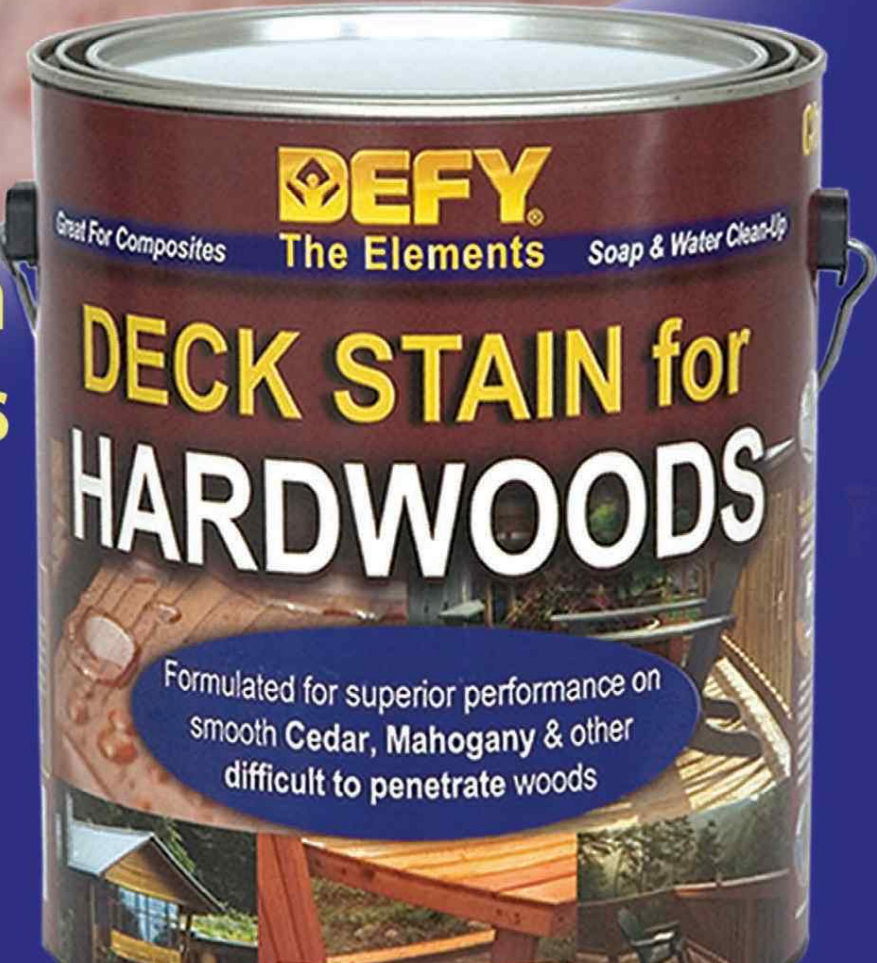
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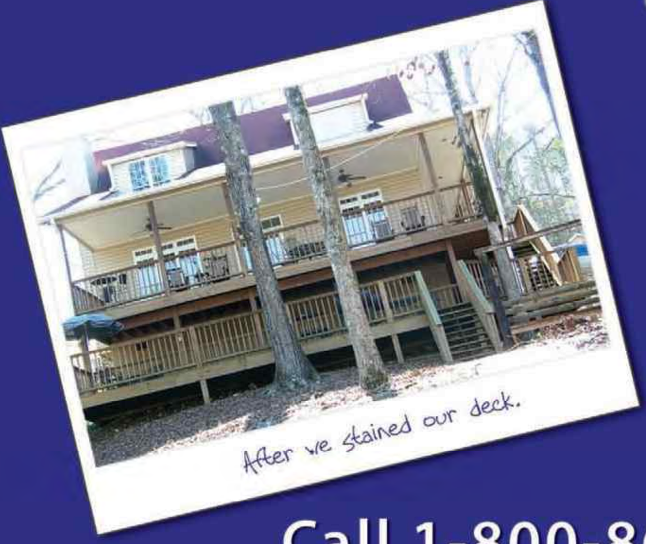

After we stained our deck.

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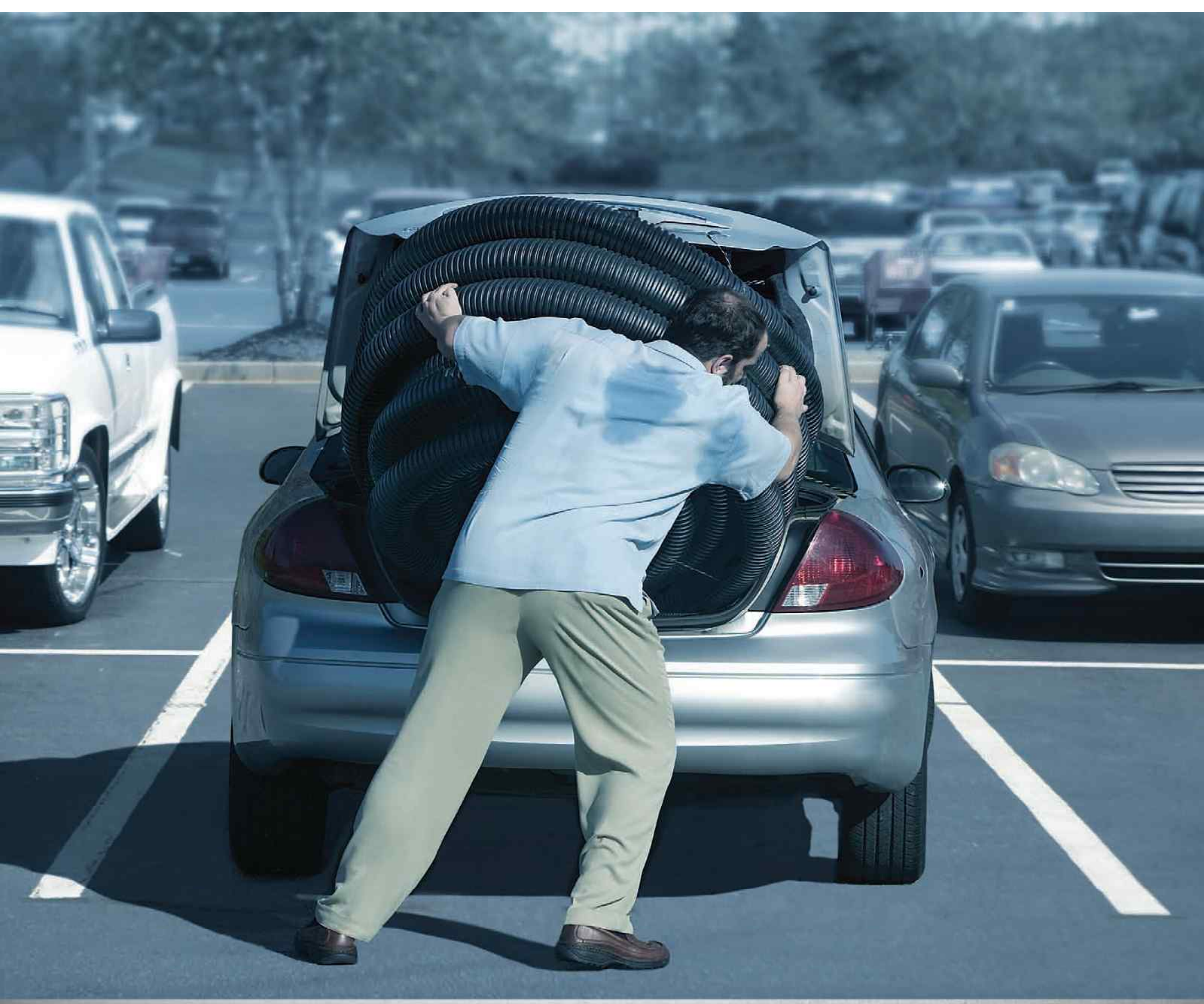
3 Things You Should Know Before Choosing A Wood Stain For Your Deck

1: It should be long-lasting. Frankly there are hundreds of stains out there to choose from. Remember the 80/20 rule? Honestly about twenty percent are decent. But how do you know if the one you choose is in the top performing twenty percent? Unfortunately you won't know for about a year or two. Experience is always a good teacher. If someone in your neighborhood stained their deck a couple of years ago and it still looks good- you might ask them what they used. Chances are if you prepare and apply the stain correctly, you'll have a good experience as well. But, know this, often the most known and heavily advertised products actually perform poorly. (We know this because we had 33 different ones independently tested.)

2: It should be user-friendly. Water-based stains are generally more user friendly than most oil based stains. They clean up with soap/water and have no nasty solvents to breathe. They dry fast once applied and the wood doesn't need to be as dry before you apply the stain. If you live in an area with a lot of moisture and humidity this is an added bonus.

3: It should be Green Performance Approved. Make sure the stain you choose has been tested and is Green Performance Approved by the Master Painters Institute (MPI). You can check by visiting specifygreen.com. They test products for environmental soundness and performance. Only products that meet their high standards are listed as "Green Performance Approved".



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